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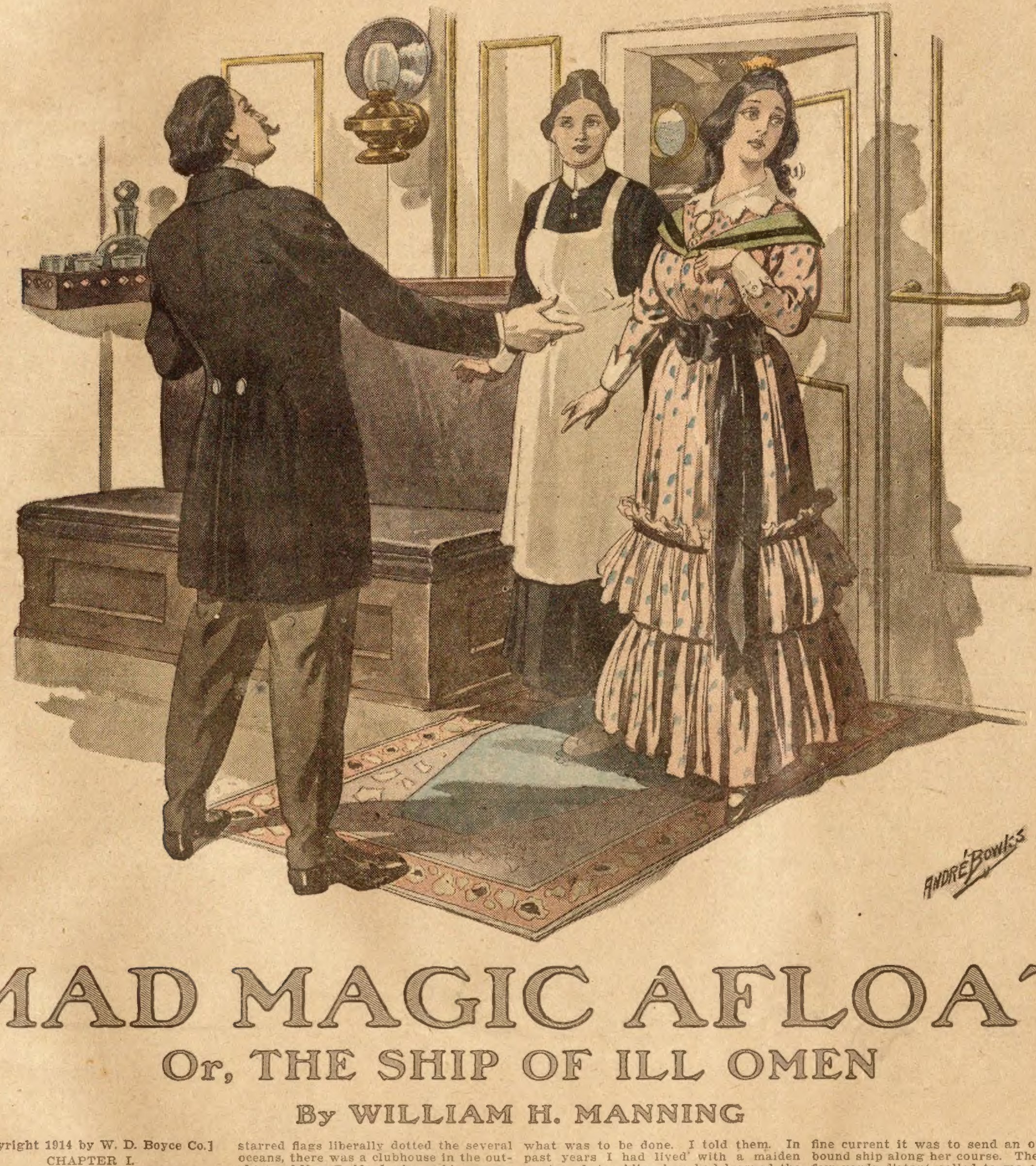

MAD MAGIC AFLOAT

Or, THE SHIP OF ILL OMEN

By WILLIAM H. MANNING

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CHAPTER I.

A LAWLESS NIGHT.

IT WAS a trivial matter that was responsible for my going to sea, but from the moment I opened my eyes on board the vessel I was in the midst of so much of scheming, mystery, and wild adventure that I class my experience as second to but few. That my life was spared where so many men fell victim to nature, and to each other, I also hold as remarkable, so that I almost forget what I suffered.

In the old days, the golden days when American shipping was a thing of substance and plowing keels and bravely-starred flags liberally dotted the several oceans, there was a clubhouse in the outskirts of New Bedford where shipowners, shipmasters, shipoutfitters, and clerks were members. Unless one was somehow connected with maritime affairs, he was barred out so irrevocably that money would not admit him except as a guest. I was a member because I was chief clerk for Lapwell & Payne, a firm that owned several vessels in the East India trade.

One evening I went to the clubhouse after promising my roommate to be home at ten o'clock. He did not see me again for many days.

On reaching the club I found some anxiety afoot. Dinner should be begun, but our cook, a fellow who sometimes imbibed too freely, was missing. The few members present were wondering what was to be done. I told them. In past years I had lived with a maiden aunt, and, to oblige her, had learned the art of cooking rather well. Since the night I mention I have considered it a fatal art. Rather proud, just then, of my knowledge, I volunteered to act as cook for the club for this occasion. My services being accepted, I took the three female helpers in tow, and between us we prepared a meal that had some good qaulities. It was eaten, and it killed nobody.

I did not sit down with my fellow members. Being overheated, I excused myself for five minutes—they proved to be a long five—and went outside for a breath of air. It was pleasant there, with the breeze driving strongly from the northwest, and I remember thinking what a fine current it was to send an outward-bound ship along her course. The trees a few yards distant called to me alluringly, and I left the piazza and sought their cover.

Then something happened.

I had seen nobody, heard nobody, but a weblike object was suddenly flung over my head, and rough hands pinioned my arms to my side. More angry than alarmed, I immediately struggled fiercely to free myself, but I had to do with too many men and too much muscle. In a short space of time I was tied up like a mummy and borne away.

They thrust me into a close carriage, and after that the feet of horses thudded hard and fast, and we were off for—where?

Until then I had not thought to call for help, but, though inclined to believe somebody was having a joke at my expense, I tried it when the idea occurred to me. I called once, thickly because of the web that still enveloped me almost to the point of suffocation, and then a pistol thumped against my head.

"Do that again and you are a dead man!"

The words made their way through the web somehow, and they carried conviction. I lost the impression that a joke was afoot. From the first I had been roughly handled, and now there was a ring to the voice that beat upon more than my ears—my mind drank in the belief that I was with desperate men, and that my life was none too safe.

I became passive, though not reconciled. Waiting fifteen minutes, I suddenly made another try for liberty—a violent effort to break loose. I failed ingloriously, and received a rap over the head for my reward that took away combativeness and consciousness.

When I returned to real life I was lying at full length, somewhere; I did not know where. Remembering my experiences, I tried to learn. Moving, I discovered that I was still bound. Trying to roll a trifle, I found I was hitched up to some unseen object—unseen because it was utterly dark.

Then I took heed to something not noticed at first. My bed was, in a way, unstable. It rolled and swayed, and as I heard a lap, lap, lap not far distant, I knew a part of the truth. I was in a vessel, and she was under way.

All the sounds of shipboard came to my hearing now. Heavy steps above my head, slight straining of lower timbers and the creaking of blocks aloft, and that lap and gurgle of the water spoke as plainly as did the heeling of the craft. We were being borne away before a breeze of such weight that the sails were undoubtedly bellying so stiffly that they did not once slat white I listened.

Kidnaped, I was being taken to sea. This amazed me. I was no mean sailor, having seen life as cabinboy and as able seaman, but in a day when New Bedford did not lack for jack-tars ready to sign the articles for any honest man, it could not be that I was shanghaied for a man before the mast. Neither was I valuable as an assistant in any high calling, and I believed I had not an enemy in the world. Then why was I kidnaped?

I lay all night studying this problem between my catnaps. I could do nothing else. I was in the berth of a stateroom, bound and gagged. My abilities began and ended in thinking. And all the while that offshore breeze blew stiffly, hardening our canvas with its send, and driving the ship until she beat up a turbulent smother at our bows and ate her way into the southeast like a mad creature fleeing from doom.

I estimated that she was doing twelve knots, and if that was so, she had, perhaps, reeled off something like fifty or sixty miles outward bound from New Bedford when the first streaks of day began to show outside the little window of my room.

It was then that a hand fumbled at the door. The door opened, and a man stood there with a light. He came close and stood looking at me. I tried to look at him, but the gleam was unpleasant to my eyes, and it was not until some seconds had passed that I could see clearly. He did not wait for me to recover from the glare.

"Are you awake?" he demanded curtly.

I gurgled the reply I could not put in words until the gag was removed. He jerked the obstacle away so roughly that my teeth clattered.

"Now, my man," he pursued commandingly, "it won't pay you to kick up a row. I'm going to free you, and you must go to work. Understand?"

"I'm no sailor!" I growled thickly, my jaws refusing to act nimbly.

"On this vessel you are a steward. As soon as I liberate you, you will proceed to set the table, and, in due time, load it with what the cook has knocked together for breakfast. In case you feel like adding that you are no steward, I will give you two bits of information. First, even your dull wits will be capable enough for you to act your part, brains not being essential in a steward. Secondly, if you rebel or act ugly, you will be flogged like a dog for the first offense and flung overboard for the second. Do you follow me?"

"Confound your impertinence!" I cried hotly, getting my jaws to work with celerity, "who do you think I am? I'm no steward! I am a man of a better station in life than any measly skipper——"

"Probably you will have to be flogged now," he said coldly.

"I'll kill the fellow who tries it!" I snapped.

"Gammon! You make me weary, but I will give you a last chance to avoid broken bones and a back marked by the cat. This ship is far from land and going like a ghost. Nobody can overhaul us, because we can show our heels to any craft afloat, and nobody will try, because there is no known reason for chasing us. You are one man, alone. Our crew counts up twenty-eight, all told. Are you going to act the fool and get seized up to the mast?"

"Shanghaied!" I groaned.

"Yes, but not for a sailor. Be glad for that. Be glad, too, if by using common sense you escape having your back ribboned by the cat. I am captain here, and a fool to waste time with such scum as you, but it is my whim to talk it all out plainly, instead of sending an understrapper. Be thankful! Then stir your wits and see what you will do. Are you philosopher or fool?"

The manner of the man and the speech of him was that of one in little love with a task so trivial as that he was upon. Weariness of mind oozed from figure to tongue. A waste of time to talk with me, a poor, insignificant fellow; but somebody had to do it. He had taken the duty, but felt himself a martyr for doing it.

I was long before looking him over keenly. He was a trifle short of middle age, spare of frame and decidedly muscular, and his keen, lank face was full of a degree of intelligence rarely found in a skipper. That was all I could find in him to praise. In his semi-refined way he looked like a knave of marked degree. It came to me that he would be a bad companion in adversity, for if there was but one chance for life, he would take it, even though he stabbed a friend to win his own safety. My opinion of this moment never required revision.

After a little delay I began a fresh argument, again asserting that I was not a seafaring man, being, as I had to express it for clearness, a shore gentleman, but he broke in so intemperately that I dropped all such talk.

"You have your clothing on," he pursued, "so no time will be needed for dressing. I'll give you five minutes to stretch your limbs, as they may have cramped. Unless you are then outside, doing your duty as steward, you will be seized up to the mast and flogged for your stubbornness. Take your choice!"

He thrust forth a knife and slit my bonds deftly. Then he walked to the door, but abruptly wheeled upon me.

"Don't get the notion that, as steward, you can secrete a table knife and arm yourself for mischief. Three times a day you will have to pass over all edged implements to the cook, who will count and keep them until the next meal. That will cripple your thirst for trouble."

With this he went away. I fell to thinking. Two things were certain. I was shanghaied and helpless. A ship's captain was as powerful as a king while his craft was afloat. To rebel was to court a flogging, perhaps death. Unquestionably, I must obey the lank-faced skipper implicitly until chance came to escape from his power.

Muttering my opinion in words I will omit, I tumbled out of my berth. My position had been so easy that I was not stiffened in my joints. The room was small, with barely enough space outside the bunk to dress in, while the deckbeams were not over six feet from the floor.

"The quarters of the regular steward," I mused. "Here I live until luck gives me a lift. Humph! Home as found!"

I washed, gave my hair a sweep with the brush and sought the cabin. It was untenanted, and I stood looking about me critically. I was tolerably familiar with the duties of a steward, but I did not know the ship. My mind told my eyes to take in details carefully.

The place was not strikingly better than the average. Good workmanship was everywhere plain, and the timbers and boards still had a hardy look that told of few voyages since the ship left the ways, but of ornament there was as little as possible.

Nothing was lacking for comfort, though, and nothing present for idle show. This ship was designed to fight the seas triumphantly, not for a lounging place in luxury.

After this survey I gave heed to the fact that I must hunt up the steward's pantry and get the table set. The recollection brought a half-amused, half-bitter smile to my face. On shore I had been head clerk for Lapwell & Payne, a confidential employe with a fine salary. Now I was doomed to act as steward in a ship whose name and destination I did not know. Truly, my fortunes had changed as radically as swiftly.

Finding the pantry, I finally had the table prepared. Thinking it was time to consider the matter of food I was about to seek for captain or mate, when something else drove the idea quickly out of my mind.

The door of a stateroom opened and two young women were revealed. This did not impress me as singular, for women aboard ship were not unusual, but as I looked I caught a note of oddity.

The foremost was looking about her with a surprised, half-bewildered look. It seemed to me that she was searching for something or somebody, and was agitated because of ill success. She looked at everything but me, and then, abruptly shifting her regard, brought the focus of her eyes full upon me.

"What ship is this?" she demanded, and for some cause her voice was unsteady.

"I don't know."

I made the reply bluntly, curtly, for a wave of wrath followed the recollection of my fallen fortunes, and I was in ill humor.

"You don't know?" she echoed strangely.

"I surely don't. In a word, I'm a shanghaied man, and that's all I know about matters here. Kidnaped, miss!"

"Kidnaped?" she cried excitedly. "Is that what has happend to me? This is not the ship Bounding Wave—merciful heavens! what has happened to me? Kidnaped? By whom? And for what purpose?"

CHAPTER II.

A MYSTERIOUS SHIP.

NOW, here was a singular beginning of my experiences as steward in the ship whose name I did not know. I was in the midst of my platters and plates, and before me stood a youthful being in dire distress. She still stood in the doorway, her hands had come together with a nervous clasp, and great, fine eyes looked wildly out of a pallid face. Like myself, she wanted to know things, and I could tell her absolutely nothing of value.

Her alarm had the good effect of taking me out of the doldrums of my personal troubles, and I bestirred myself and took note that she was as pretty as she was young, and I should not have set her at a day over twenty-one.

One swift glance I took at her companion, and, seeing only a stumpy miss who had servant maid written big all over her, I dropped her and centered attention upon the divinity in distress. I took two steps nearer to her. I comprehended that she mistakenly thought I had said she, not I, was kidnaped, but it began to look as if we were in a similiar boat.

"Do you mean," I demanded, "that you are here against your will?"

"I expected to sail for Southampton in the ship Bounding Wave, of which my uncle, Adoniram West, is captain. With my companion and my trunks, I came on board at a late hour, last night. There was some difficulty in picking out the right vessel, for we did not know her berth precisely, but when my cabman inquired of the man on this deck, he stated that this was the Bounding Wave——"

"But," I interrupted, "where was the captain?"

"The man on deck said he was ashore getting some error corrected in the manifest. I had never been here except once some years ago, and as the last night was dark, and this cabin but dimly lighted, I saw nothing outside and little here. But, sir—this is not the cabin of the Bounding Wave!"

Her hands had relaxed, but now they came together again, and if such a thing was possible she grew even more pallid.

"What's your uncle like?" I asked.

"He is a short, stout man with a great black beard——"

"The fellow who claims to be skipper here is tall, rather thin, and smooth-faced. That is all I know, thus far, for I have been shanghaied aboard, and left tied up all night in the dark of a room. I do not know who the captain is, nor what's the name of the vessel——"

I paused to take a rapid survey of the bulkheads of the cabin, but neither there nor elsewhere could I discover a name.

"I am kidnaped!" whispered the girl.

My own troubles were wholly forgotten. They mattered nothing. A man, enmeshed in such a net, had only to accept the misfortunes of his position as composedly as possible, and leave the rest to time. But this refined, delicate girl—I had been in a tumult of hot anger, but I now grew coldly calm, feeling that fate had mixed me up with her affairs purely to have me of use. Then and there I swore to be of use, even if I had to take the life of the scoundrel who had stolen her.

"Let us exchange confidences quickly," I suggested. "My name is John Harding, and I am a clerk for Lapwell & Payne, shipping merchants in New Bedford. I have been abducted and brought here, presumably to act as steward, for that is the work I've been ordered to do. This is my first hour of liberty. That's my story. Now, if you would tell me yours——"

"My name is Althea Leerick, and this is my maid, Hannah. I live in New Haven, and this was to be a pleasure trip in my uncle's ship——"

Her voice fell away. Both of us heard footsteps in the companionway. A glance that way showed a pair of legs, and a foot that sought a lower step.

"It is probably the captain!" I explained, lowering my voice. "You can speak with him. Try to retain your composure, and insist upon your rights. Threaten him with the law——"

I let it rest at that. Common sense told me that a man who would steal two girls would not be moved an atom by the threat I had suggested, so I dropped platitudes and left her to her own devices.

I had made no error in guessing who was at hand. The captain appeared, tall, straight, alert, and looking quite as villainous as when he called upon me in my cabin. Now I was ignored, but he pulled off his hat to Miss Leerick. He might well have kept it on, for there was no chivalry or good will in his manner or expression.

"Up so early?" he questioned imperturbably. "I had fancied you would rest longer. However, I have no fault to find. I dare say you desire an explanation——"

"Surely I do!" she cried quickly.

"But just why?" he inquired smoothly.

"Because I am in a strange vessel! This is not the Bounding Wave. Where is Captain West?"

"That is what I wanted to tell you. You see, there was some trifling difficulty that beset Captain West at the last moment, some red-tape twist of the law; and he took the matter into his own hands and ran away out of port, leaving others to fight it out with the officials who wanted to harass him. Before sailing he asked me to give him a bit of help. The result is that when about eighteen hours out he will lay to and wait for me. Then you will be transhipped."

It was a fluent explanation, but I knew the man lied. All things went to prove that. Merchant ships did not run away thus from their home ports.

Miss Leerick looked at the man doubtfully.

"If this is so, why didn't my uncle inform me?" she asked.

"He could not wait."

"A man might have met me when I came on from New Haven."

"Didn't Prescott meet you?" and the questioner seemed surprised.

"No."

"Then he will suffer for it when Captain West sees him again. He was clerk or something for the captain's owners, and was ordered to meet you and explain."

The girl's expression changed. What she had heard was rather reasonable to a dweller on land, and she had to recognize the fact.

"You say you will transfer me to the Bounding Wave?"

"Most certainly."

"Can you find her? The sea is wide——"

"Captain West gave me the latitude and longitude with precision. We can't miss each other."

"And when do we meet my uncle?"

"At noon today."

"Well, I suppose it is all right, though the proceeding is very odd. Still, if uncle thinks it best, I cannot object. At noon, today?"

"Yes. In the meanwhile, madam, it is my wish that you make yourself thoroughly at home in my ship. All possible comforts and conveniences will be at your service, and we do set rather a good table, if I say it myself. Whatever can be done shall surely be done. Captain West has helped me more than once, and if I can square the account by kindness to one of his friends, why, that's great good luck."

These were fair words, and the speaker had taken to smiling affably, but I liked him none the more. Smile and voice lacked that convincing element that marks the way of a truthful and well-disposed man. Almost could I have sworn the whole tale was a lie, and Althea did not warm like one wholly satisfied.

"What ship is this?" she asked.

"The Gak-el-Zinto."

"What?" she cried, bewildered.

"The Gak-el-Zinto," and he smiled widely. "It's a fancy name. Means something like Glory of the Sun in the language of which it is a part. Peculiar fancy of some shipmaster who had the old hooker before I came on board. By the way, I am Captain Torrington."

With this he wheeled upon me, for I was lingering near to see if my help was needed by the girl. I thought I caught a hostile glint in his eyes, as if he resented my presence, but he very civilly bade me see the cook and get breakfast upon the table. Next he added to the fair passenger that he hoped she would be able to do execution when the food was served.

It was clear that he was on his good behavior, so I walked away to attend to my duties with composure, but with an active mind. I greatly distrusted ship and captain. The naval campaign of Porter and his gallant fellows in the West Indies had pretty well stamped out the lingering threads of piracy, a few years before, but it was not to be believed that all seafarers were now angels. I could not believe with Torrington so near.

I wondered why Miss Leerick and myself had been kidnaped, little suspecting how much more of mystery I was soon to encounter.

For some time I was busy, and then, with the table supplied, I saw four persons sit to eat. Besides Althea and Torrington there was a slender, black-haired, black-eyed man in rather foppish attire, and a burly, square-jawed fellow who was a mass of muscle. A more incongruous party could not well have been gathered, and the burly person looked like a brute without brains.

Waiting upon the party in my capacity of servant, I looked and listened. Torrington presided with grace, and not without outward good will. He was unostentatiously attentive to Althea, and I tried to argue favorably from this, but any advance he might have made in my estimate of his sincerity was offset by the male company he was in. The burly man was repulsive, and the slend one a doubtful quantity.

Before the breakfast was eaten in full, I had several times heard the former addressed as Professor, and the latter as Monsieur. I wondered what it all meant. That Monsieur was French was certain, but the other fellow seemed fit for no professorship unless it was that of a butchershop. However, they were plainly friends of the captain.

When they rose from the table Torrington invited all hands to accompany him to the deck, and they went. Immediately after their disappearance, a

Next week "The Wreck of the Golconda" and "Why He Feared," followed by "Detective Keeneye's Craft; or, The Delemere Mystery," and "Prisoners of Tecumseh; or, The Boys of Old Fort Meigs." Splendid stories. Read them.

red-headed man stumped down the companionway, entered the cabin, and flung himself into a chair at the table. This done, he turned his eyes upon me in surly regard.

"Breakfast! Hustle!" he growled with brevity.

Of course I had readily determined his position on board the ship, but he made it clear by another growl, as I poured his tea.

"I'm Barton, chief mate. See that you call me 'mister.' I'm an easy man with them who toe the mark, but rank poison to anybody that thinks he can soldier. Get that in your brainpan?"

His manner was as offensive as his words, and I read him well. He was the sea bully who thought everybody dogs except himself and his captain, and he rammed the fact home by word and look, but I had made my decision before he appeared. While I was doomed to sail in the vessel I must make the best of a bad matter.

"I intend to do my work properly, sir," I replied.

The last word nearly choked me, but I had to use it or get into immediate trouble.

"Chances are you don't know your business, but I have two fists, and if you fail I'll hammer sense into you."

My blood boiled at the insult, and I longed to take the cudgels up with him then and there, but it would have been madness. The man who rebelled on board the Gak-el-Zinto would speedily go to feed the fishes. I crushed back my indignation and grew all the more resolved to make the best of my wretched situation.

The mate swallowed his food like a bulldog, but spoke not a word more, and then he lumbered out of the room. He was barely gone when Torrington reappeared.

"You may go on deck and wait there until I come for you," he directed.

It was an odd time to send a steward away from his quarters, but I was satisfied. I was not so dull as to fail to suspect that some further knavery was afoot, but it did not seem to concern me, and leaving the captain in the cabin, I went to get what I had longed for, a look at the outlying waters.

Reaching the deck, the first thing I saw was Monsieur bending over Althea and talking volubly, but I passed that by. My interest was not with them at that moment.

The Gak-el-Zinto was running her course with a stiff breeze on her starboard quarter, and heeling with hollowed canvas. The sea was worried by the drive of the wind, running as if to escape punishment. I looked on all sides, but saw no other craft in sight. We seemed to have a world all to ourselves.

It was a keen disappointment, for it sent me the thought that we who had been kidnaped were fated to endure what the kidnapers wished. Another ship might have furnished means of escape.

I was still at my survey when a slant of wind tore Althea's veil adrift from her hat and sent it flying until it dropped down the companionway. I was after it quickly, and reaching it, again had the cabin under survey. I looked that way and had a surprise.

Captain Torrington was crossing the room, carrying a tray which was piled with food. He did not see me, and going farther, he suddenly turned, applied a key to a stateroom door, opened it, and disappeared, food and all. Astonished, I stared at the door he pulled to after him. Thanks to the matter of the veil, I had stumbled upon a fresh perplexity. I had been sent away, and now the captain was strangely occupied. What mystery was being kept under lock and key?

CHAPTER III.
SHIPMATE WITH CRIME.

DURING the next half-minute I did some rapid thinking. I had not yet had a glance into any of the several staterooms, and was entirely ignorant of how they were occupied. It was, however, a surprise that anybody was there who required feeding. Ship etiquette demanded that all passengers, if physically able, should eat at the first table. Afterwards, the mate had his food. All had appeared to be going along the usual channels, but I now had proof that it was not so.

Who was about to be fed? Why was the person locked into the room? I could not pass the question by with the surmise that illness explained everything, for Captain Torrington had sent me away so he could act secretly. But why? As master of the ship his will was supreme. Then why this secrecy? The answer was plain—he had a guilty something to hide from men.

The Gak-el-Zinto was additionally resolving itself into a theater of mystery. It occurred to me that I would do well not to be discovered where I was, and I clutched the veil tightly and hastened back to the deck. As I neared Althea and her companions, Monsieur's voice stole into my ears as he addressed the young lady blandly.

"Believe me," he said, "I am delighted that you are to be a companion on this voyage."

"But I am not," Althea replied hastily.

"No, mademoiselle?"

"I leave the ship at noon."

"Do you fly?" Monsieur asked, astonished.

"I am to be transferred to another vessel."

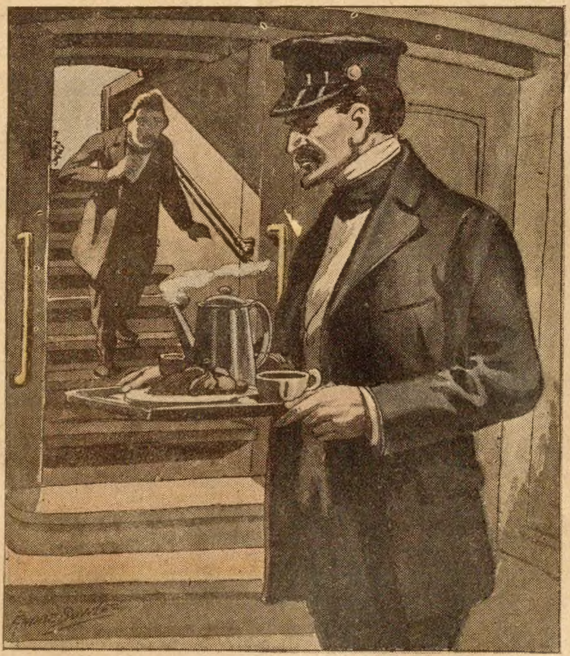
"Oh!"

He sounded the word oddly, and a furtive smile crossed his face. I could have sworn he did not believe it, and his doubt added fuel to my former belief. Unquestionably, Althea had been kidnaped, and it was the intention to keep her in this ship of sin.

I wanted to hear what more the Frenchman would say, but I was at hand with the veil, and had to pass it to its owner and take myself off. Being steward, I was barred out of the passenger circle. For a moment I was absorbed in my indignation, but I had not yet fully analyzed the outlying sea, and I forgot all but that and looked.

The water was as I had seen it before. The wind blew, the sea leaped upward spitefully, the caps twirled white and frothy, and no ship but ours rode within sight. Hard on our larboard beam the skyline was blurred by a tiny gray patch that had a hue unlike sea or heavens, but if it was the upper sails of a vessel, it was many miles distant.

Next I looked to our own craft. The Gak-el-Zinto was a full-rigged ship of perhaps five hundred tons. She was as neat as any vessel I had ever seen, her decks being scrubbed white and dirt nowhere visible. Her sails were far from new, but looked to be capable of standing more than another gale. In every way she impressed me as strictly seaworthy. That she passed for a merchantman was certain, and, perhaps, true.



I had a surprise.

Last of all I scanned the crew. I was prepared to see a gang of cutthroats fit for a pirate party, but even prejudice could not place them so unfavorably. Some were rough, perhaps even brutal, but the majority were outwardly typical sailors such as I had seen afloat and ashore for many years. That, of course, did not prove them honest men.

After my survey I remembered Althea again, and looked that way. Monsieur was still acting the gallant, and clearly in his element, but she was as plainly ill at ease.

Frequently her gaze wandered a-sea, as if searching for her uncle's ship, but nothing was there to lighten her downcast expression. Poor girl! I was certain it would be many days before she saw uncle or home.

Presently Torrington reappeared and very briefly directed me to finish my work below. I went, and began clearing the table. There are few things more prosaic in life than table dishes, and on this occasion I gave them even less thought than usual.

Working, I stole frequent glances at the closed door beyond which the captain had gone. Who was in the room? My curiosity became keener as time passed, and I made little deviations as I walked so as to pass near the door. I heard nothing, and was confident that the door was locked. The skipper had his secret well guarded.

Nobody came near me as I did my morning tasks. Being a new hand, and a shanghaied man, I expected to be spied upon. If I was, I failed to detect the fact. Torrington kept to the deck, and so did Althea. I wanted further speech with her, but suspected that I would not get it for some time. The poor child would naturally remain where she could watch the sea for her uncle's ship.

When at leisure I took an account of stock, as I may say. With matters as they were, I must be prepared either to submit passively to events or array myself as a champion of the kidnaped girl.

That wild times were coming, that she would be in vital peril and in need of help was sure. What was I to do about it? I had already decided. Although I was but one man, and painfully incapable of giving permanent help if the crew sided with the captain, I would show my teeth briefly in the girl's defense. That was my way of expressing it to myself, but it was only figurative.

What I meant was to dispose of Torrington if Althea's safety demanded. But how was I to do it? I needed a revolver, and set about finding one. I was anxious to be armed.

I searched the cabin and all staterooms except that with a locked door. I found no weapon. Back in the cabin again, I stood looking about me regretfully and in irritation, and it was then that I noticed something under the table that perplexed me. It was not a firearm, but certainly an oddity, and I went down on my knees after it. Rising, I had it in my hands.

It was an object a foot long, with oval sides, being perhaps three-quarters of an inch thick in its center, and tapering to blunt edges. I judged it to be polished bone, possibly from a whale or some such huge creature. This was commonplace; but there was more.

From end to end the thing was carved elaborately and skillfully, various definite designs being placed in groups throughout. I could make nothing of it, though among other designs was the sun, the moon, and various stars. Here and there were numerals, both Roman and Arabic, with other mathematical signs. Except for these, all was mystic. Characters I had never seen before were scattered in all directions.

A greater novelty had never come under my attention. Had I never been to sea before I should have believed it to be the idle work of a natural artist in such carvings, but I had been to the islands of the barbaric oceans in my day.

Carvings on bone had several times come under by observation, and especially in one case where a bloodthirsty native chief had been slain just before he was about to sacrifice a prisoner. The rescue party acquired the chief's war-club, and set into it was a strip of bone carved with wild scenes of battle and violence. My discovery recalled this matter, though the pictured designs where wholly different.

Little suspecting what an important part the object was to play in the near future, I decided that it was some acquisition of Captain Torrington's when he was in the Southern seas. I was about to place it on the table, when an irritable mood came over me, and merely out of spite, I flung it back where it had been.

I was growing eager to learn more about the Gak-el-Zinto, and as I was at liberty, I sought the galley to talk with the cook. My previous experience with him had been limited to getting food from him quarters, but he had seemed to be a decent man, and as he was the one humble person aboard to whom I had spoken, I decided to try him.

I went, found him inside the galley, borrowed a pipe, and lit it after deferentially asking his permission.

"Can't do without my tobacco," I remarked, smiling.

"Got enough for a long voyage?" he asked.

"Not unless I buy."

"Or steal."

"Good joke," I returned, comprehending that it was no more. "Long voyages make inroads in personal stores, sure enough. About how long is ours, anyhow?"

"Twice the half of it," and the cook smiled in self-appreciation.

"A landsman," I pursued, "is poor at geography. Just where is our port located, anyhow?"

The cook's left eye closed slowly and his smile broadened.

"Matey," he answered, "ask the skipper that. I've found it wise in this world not to know much, an' not to be sure of what I do know. Ask the skipper! I'm dumb. I was born that way."

Decided as the rebuff was, good nature was back of it, but perhaps the cook felt that his own safety was jeopardized by having me as his companion. He winked again, and then left the galley and walked toward the foremast hands.

Baffled, I had gained one item of information. Whatever our destination was, it was not an honest port, or the man would have said so. I was left to ponder on that fact that the Gak-el-Zinto was afloat with kidnaped persons in her, and bound for a place not to be spoken of openly. The mysterious business grew more ugly.

I could not linger alone in the galley, so I went below. My pantry and my little birdcage of a stateroom were open to me, and I was thinking of going that way when I again remembered the closed room into which the captain had carried food. A wave of recklessness swept over me, and ignoring the fact that my spying might be detected, I went to the door. I was eager to learn who and what was there.

My position had barely been attained when a deep voice mumbled within:

"My good fellow, be wholly at your ease. We have been taken away to be murdered at Torrington's leisure."

I started. Had the infamous captain kidnaped the world by piecemeal, to work his will on the lonely sea? But why? I bent my ear closer to listen further. Who was inside? And why were they there?

This strange story leads to very extraordinary situations and dramatic episodes. The reader will find it eminently worth reading to the end. Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of it. The surest way to get the Ledger is to subscribe for it and have it come to your home regularly. Today is a good time to attend to this.

* * *

The Spoils.

"Between my wife and my dog I have a pretty hard time," said the head of the household. "Both are always bringing home things that I have to dispose of. My wife gets them at bargain sales and auctions and such places as that. But where my dog gets his treasures, heaven only knows!

"We have a garret and a cellar full of things that my wife has bought that are utterly useless. There has never been any other way of disposing of her wares. Lots of times I can't even figure out what they are for, and I don't believe my wife knows. They are Oriental sometimes, Aztec and Indian sometimes. But always they are a puzzle.

"The dog does the same sort of things, although his conquests are usually recognizable, and once he brought me a pair of perfectly good trousers! In the pockets were 75 cents and a beer check, all of which proved acceptable.

"On another occasion my knowledge of anatomy enabled me to classify my dog's trophy as the dressed carcass of a sheep. He was very proud of that find.

"As is the way with all professionals, my dog and my wife can never see any virtue in each other's winnings. He sniffs at her Japanese cotton crepe aeroplane holder, for all the world as if it were a bar of soap, and her receptacle for meteors is about as interesting to him as a brush and comb.

"My wife is equally unresponsive. In fact, she is militantly opposed to my dog's discoveries. For example, when he proudly strutted into the drawingroom, where my wife was entertaining the Elinor Glyn Literary Society, and displayed there a section of a cow's backbone, my wife raised a scream of horror in which all her guests joined.

"So embarrassed did the poor dog become that he dropped his prize and retired in confusion. Then my wife gathered up the backbone with a pair of double embossed Louis XIV. coal tongs, that otherwise might have gone forever unused, and carried it out. I don't know but that she employed the tongs in hitting the poor dog over the head. But even so, that does not count in summing up the tongs' usefulness, for it was not a legitimate purpose for which to use them. A broom or a comet eradicator would have done just as well."

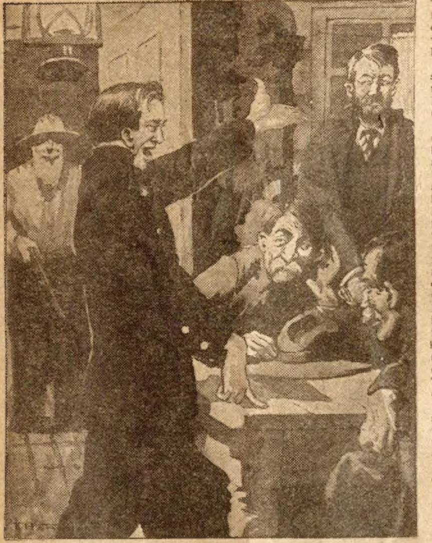
* * *

But why should any fool man want to stand prosperity? It's up to the prosperous chap to sit down and take it easy.

Southland Stories

IN BORROWED PLUMES

By HAPSBURG LIEBE



"I found him the very first day out!"

THE sun was almost down when Lafe Ordway reached the crest of the Panther Mountain, a long hulk that lay half in North Carolina and half in Tennessee. He turned, panting from the long, hard climb, and tried to distinguish in the distant smoke haze the crest of his home mountain, the Big Blackfern, which was some twenty miles to the westward; but the day was too far gone and the haze was too thick. Turning, he smiled, his young black eyes filled with pleasure, and began to walk down the long slope that led to the country of his father's people. Lafe Ordway, dressed in his best, was going on a visit.

A few rods down among the laurels and the stunted ivy he came upon the tracks of a horse in the soft earth. He knelt, in the manner of the born woodsman, and found that the horse had been freshly shod, and that it was a large animal. He straightened, and moved on. His path led him on the back trail for a hundred feet—and then he stopped suddenly and whistled in surprise.

On the ground before him lay a coat of officer blue, and on its left breast, as though either a protection for the man who wore it or a dare, gleamed a nickel-plated United States marshal's badge!

Lafe Ordway rubbed his smooth, sunburned chin for a moment. Then he walked gingerly all the way around the garment, his eyes never once leaving it.

"This here coat's been lost offen the saddle," he concluded. "Some officer's lost it. Yes, sir, some officer's lost his coat, shore."

He stooped, took the blue garment by its collar, and picked it up. Something in one of the outside pockets jingled musically—handcuffs, Lafe knew. From an inside pocket the square corner of a bit of cardboard protruded, inviting his curiosity. Now, if a mountaineer, young and inexperienced in ways other than those of the woods, is anything, he is curious; so Lafe Ordway, feeling more or less guilty, lifted the square piece of cardboard out and looked at it.

It was the photograph of a man's head and shoulders. The chin was entirely hidden by a short, rounded, black beard; the eyes were dark and as piercing as any eyes Lafe had ever seen, and the whole visage was wicked. Plainly, it was the likeness of a criminal. Lafe very carefully replaced the photograph.

Then he lowered the garment until it swept the red and gold autumn leaves at his feet, and began to think. There was a strong strain of humorous devilment in Lafe Ordway. Suppose, now, he were to hide his gray coat, don this blue, and appear among his father's people as a United States marshal! His black eyes twinkled, and a broad smile came to his sunburned face. Sure, he would do it! The tracks of the officer's horse led the other way, and there was small chance of his being found out.

Yes, there was a strong strain of humorous devilment in Lafe Ordway's makeup.

He hid his gray coat in the end of a hollow, uprooted tree, and slipped into the blue garment. It was a fairly good fit on his muscular figure. He was glad his trousers were blue; they went well with the coat. Yes, his father's people would regard him a person of some importance—they would, indeed! He rubbed the shining badge of authority with a big, red handkerchief, laughed aloud, brushed the dust from his sleeves. Then he moved off down the mountain with long, swinging strides, his booted feet plowing noisily through the brightly colored leaves.

Night had settled down thickly when he drew up at the gate before his Uncle Bill Ordway's cabin. A long-eared hound ran toward him and growled. He hallooed, and a man, tall and gaunt and grizzled, came to the doorway.

"Who's thar?"

"United States Marshal Lafe Ordway," replied the young mountaineer, swollen with pride.

"Who'n the dev——Lafe, shorely, that hain't you? Humph! Git under this here house, dawg—triflin' scoundrel, you! Come on in, Lafe, and don't be skeered o' that thar hound. What was it you said about a United States marshal, Lafe?" Bill Ordway paused, breathless, and entered the cabin with his nephew.

"I said," smiled Lafe, his chest prominent that the marshal's badge might show to better advantage in the feeble light of a tallow dip, "I said it was United States Marshal Lafe Ordway."

"Land o' tar heels!" Bill Ordway erupted. "And so you're a officer! And so how'd you leave all o' the folks over on the Blackfern, in Tennessee, Lafe?"

Lafe told his kinsman that the folks were as well as usual, and turned to greet his aunt and several cousins. Shortly afterward they sat down to supper.

"A course you're over here to ketch that thar low down Western outlaw?" guessed Bill Ordway, passing a dish of home-cured bacon.

Western outlaw! Lafe looked up quickly from the cup of coffee he had been stirring vigorously. But he mustn't evince the least surprise.

"Shore," he replied. He thought of the photograph in one of the pockets of the blue coat. He held the picture up to his uncle's gaze. "That's him, I reckon, as you're a-talkin' about?" he drawled.

"That's him—that's shore him," vouchsafed Bill Ordway, his brows drawing angrily. "Meanest white man this side o' perdition, Lafe. The law got after him hot out West, and he lodged in here several weeks ago. As I said, he's as mean as pizen, or meaner, Lafe. Quickest shot I've ever seen anywhars. He can shoot the spots outen the ten o' spades in the dark with either hand. Slick as a weasel, too. Now you see him, and now you don't. We've all tried all manner o' tricks to ketch him, all for nothin'. Laughs at us. Shoots holes in our hats. We sent word to town about him last week, and I reckon you're the answer."

"Yes," agreed Lafe, now a trifle pale. "I reckon I'm the answer." Lafe's glorious appetite had suddenly flown. The food began to taste as rotted wood in his mouth. Truly, his borrowed plumes were about to get him into deep water. He knew that there were among his father's people men who were better marksmen, and men of more cunning, than he. He knew that as an officer of the law he would be expected to bring the bad man to justice. Perhaps, he thought, it would be better to confess all, and laugh it off. The words of the confession were on the tip of his tongue, when there came a halloo from the night.

It was a group of his relatives, summoned by one of Bill Ordway's boys. Truly, United Strates Marshal Lafe Ordway was a person of some importance among his father's people.

So, after being further admired for the coat and the badge he wore, Lafe found it exceedingly hard to cheat himself of the adulation by confessing to the finding of his insignia of authority. He resolved to act the part during the few days of his visit. Perhaps, he told himself in a whisper, the bad man would accommodatingly keep out of the way.

And that night they had a dance at Bill Ordway's cabin, and Lafe was still further admired and praised. All of which, of course, served to make a confession still harder.

The next day Lafe examined his new rifle and set out, walking straight under the gaze of many admiring eyes, to comb the neighborhood for the man the law wanted. His relatives had proffered their assistance in the hunt; but Lafe refused any aid—suppose he were to happen upon the real marshal, by some chance, and be exposed! No, Lafe didn't want a posse. He was, he declared with his head high, entirely able to cope with the situation.

All that day he pretended to be hunting for the man with the short, black beard. It is not strange that the weather was sufficiently warm to cause him to remove the blue coat and carry it under one arm. And when night had come, being in a country not altogether familiar to him, Lafe Ordway found himself lost.

For an hour he waded along through the leaves, trying to find the way back to his father's relatives, all to no avail. The night had quickly become pitchy black, owing to the shutting out of the starlight by the smoke from mountain fires. Lafe stumbled many times, and more times than one measured his six feet on the ground. It was when he was about to give up and camp for the night that he saw, some three hundred yards down a long, thinly wooded slope, one small, lonely point of light.

Lafe straightened. He believed that at last he was near the cabin of his Uncle Bill. He once more donned the blue coat, and this time he buttoned all its buttons, and turned the collar snugly up against his neck. Then he began to make his way slowly toward the lonely point of fire.

But when he had reached the cabin, he found that there was nothing whatever familiar about it. Even in the darkness he could see that it was small and dilapidated. There was no garden, no flowers; the two small windows, through which weak and flickering shafts of light came, were shutterless. He moved quietly around to the doorway and paused there. The door was off its wooden hinges and was held in place by a bit of rotting board from within. Lafe leaned closer and peered between the edge of the door and the rotting jamb.

On the mildewed stone hearth there was a very small fire. Sitting on the floor before it there was a man. Lafe pressed an inch nearer and saw that the man wore a gray raincoat, a broad, black hat, and—a short, round, black beard!

Lafe caught his breath and eased backward. His heart was thumping loudly—for a moment he was afraid that the man within the old cabin must hear it. But there were no cowards in Lafe Ordway's family tree, and Lafe's courage began to rise.

After all, the outlaw was no more than a human being, he reasoned. Perhaps, he reasoned further, the outlaw was not so strong a human being as he. If he could once get the drop——

To the left of the cabin there rose a ridge. The young mountaineer crept noiselessly to the side of this ridge, from which point he could see the man within. Sitting there, he watched his quarry broil a slice of bacon on the coals, and it made him hungry.

"I'll wait till he goes to sleep," thought Lafe, "and then I'll light down on him so quick that he won't know what's what until I've got the handcuffs on him."

And as Lafe watched the bearded man stretch himself on the floor, composing himself for sleep, his courage rose to the point of impatience. For he was going to make good. And then he would confess: it would be a good joke then.

Slowly the little fire died down and the shaft of light that went out by the shutterless windows and to the hemlock boughs died away. Except for the mournful cry of little brown owls the night was as still as the tomb itself. Lafe believed that his time had come; he rose, stretched the cramp out of his long legs, and began to creep toward the nearest window.

When he had reached the window he straightened and peered in. In the light of the dying coals he could make out the indistinct shape of the bearded man, also he could distinguish a familiar shape nearby that he knew to be a revolver of heavy caliber. Lafe's rifle went up against the log wall and rested there; then Lafe climbed as noiselessly as a panther through the window and leaped down upon the heavy, outstretched figure.

The figure became life in the passing of a second. It cried out in surprise and began to search the floor with one hand for the revolver that had lain there—a futile search, for Lafe Ordway had already sent it flying across the floor. There came a snap, and half the manacles had done their duty. The bearded man began to strike with his knees. Lafe forced them down and with a powerful effort brought the other wrist into the clutches of the handcuffs. This done, he rose to his feet, his breathing labored, and kicked the coals in the fireplace into life.

"Well, I ketched you, I reckon, by gyar," he said to his captive, who was sitting on the floor and eying him in mingled anger and disgust.

"Yes, you caught me," replied the prisoner, his piercing black eyes shining upward like bits of polished metal in the clear glow of the coals. "You're very smart for so young a man."

Lafe felt the sting of the other's speech acutely. He quailed before the fire of the other's gaze. As though to protect himself he walked across the creaking floor, felt for the big revolver and found it.

"I say you're smart," repeated the man on the floor.

Lafe walked back to the hearth, the pistol held menacingly. "Yes," he agreed, "I am. I've done what a whole devil of a lot o' other fellers couldn't do, anyhow, hain't I?"

The answer came quickly, like a shot; "You have."

After a moment of silence the bearded man broke out:

"Of all the idiots—of all the confounded idiots——"

Lafe jabbed the big revolver into his captive's face and shut him up. Lafe didn't wait to hear any more expletives.

"Cut that right out, mister," he advised.

The bearded one sneered openly. "Well, what're you going to do with me, now that you've caught me—and, say, where'd you get your authority, young fellow?"

"Don't matter to you nothin' about my authority," returned Lafe. "As for what I'm goin' to do with you, I'm goin' to take you over to my Uncle Bill Ordway's house. Git up! Scoot! March!"

The bearded man went awkwardly to his feet.

"March, I say!" exclaimed Lafe, and he took his captive by the collar of the gray raincoat. "And don't you undertake to try no tricks with me—have you got that?"

"I have," replied the other shortly.

Witness a bit of stratagem on the part of Mountaineer Lafe Ordway: If he couldn't himself find the way to the house of his father's brother Bill, perhaps the bad man could—the bad man, he reasoned, might know where Bill Ordway lived. And it worked. It worked admirably. The bad man walked toward the doorway obediently, Lafe's hand still on the collar of the gray raincoat, and set out through the night with the manner of one who knows his ground.

"And if you know what's good for yore gen'ral health," advised Lafe, as they were swallowed up in the shadows of the giant hemlocks, "you won't try no tricks with me."

"I am sure not to try any tricks," was the reply. "Just you be careful with that gun of mine."

"I reckon," snorted Lafe, "that I know how to handle a gun. I wasn't born yistiddy."

After two hours of brisk walking through the laurels and rattleweed, through dark ravines and rock-strewn coves, the country began to grow familiar to Lafe. Soon he recognized a great dead chestnut tree, which reached upward with bleak, bare branches for more than a hundred feet, that grew near his Uncle Bill's clearing fence. His chest swelled out with triumph; there was now little or no danger of his captive making an escape. He looked for some sign of a light; there was none; all was still and dark.

They walked up to the gate and a hound ran out to meet them, growling savagely. Lafe hallooed and a voice answered sleepily:

"Who's thar?"

"It's me," replied Lafe—"United States Marshal Lafe Ordway. I've got him, Uncle Bill, shore!"

Bare feet struck the floor with a thump. There was the sound of a match being scratched on a stone hearth and then a candle was lighted. Bill Ordway slipped into his trousers and opened the door.

"You've got him, you say?"

"I shore have," declared Lafe, leading his captive up to the doorway. When they had stepped inside, he continued: "I was jest a-jokin' about a-bein' a officer, Uncle Bill—I jest happened to find a marshal's badge and coat, and I thought I'd act marshal long enough to get rid o' this here outlaw for you folks."

"So," replied Bill Ordway, peering into the face of the heavily bearded man.

"I reckon you fellers never tried very hard to ketch him, did you, Uncle Bill?" asked Lafe, his chest thrown out. "Why,

(Continued on page fourteen.)

Dorothy Dayne, Rebel

Or, AN ENEMY OF THE KING

By T. C. Harbaugh

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CHAPTER V.

THE TRAITOR.

IT WAS the same night, after Dorothy Dayne's adventure at General Clinton's bal masque, and the cold dawn was not far away.

In a room in the upper story of a house on Lower Broadway stood a strange-looking man. His hawk-like nose would have determined his identity even if all other signs had failed. Clad in the rich uniform of a British General, the insignia of his lofty rank, with a pair of lustful eyes, a crabbed, money-getting mien, and a nervous exterior, the man who had sold his country was alone.

One noticeable thing about the room was the fact that the large oval mirror on the wall had been reversed. There was a smaller looking-glass on the table, but it lay on its face. This man could not see his own reflection, and why should he want to see it? Already his trappings were distasteful to him. They told him in silent but terrible language the foul story of his treason. They itched him like the shirt of Nessus. For them he exchanged the uniform worn at Quebec and Saratoga, where his bravery had shone forth like one lone star in a darkened sky.

What was he now? A modern Judas, the murderer of Andre, a man once trusted by Washington, who now wanted his treacherous life, a person without real friends, hated by those who had profited by his treason. He knew he was hated by the whole British army, that even Sir Henry Clinton shunned him, that people crossed the street so as not to encounter him, and already the canker of remorse had eaten into his sordid soul.

Hating the cause he had once served, despising those whom he had led on the battlefield, he lived in a little world of his own, and if he had looked into the future, he might have heard his name hissed through the years to come. Benedict Arnold was already an outcast, the Ishmael of his day, his hand against the world and the world's hand against him.

As yet he had received no orders from the King's generals, as if they feared to trust a branded traitor, for a traitor once is a traitor always.

Presently he advanced across the room and looked out of the window. He saw the lights of boats on the river, he heard the rattle of the sash in the grasp of the cold wind, and as he caught sight of the dismal flakes that spattered the panes, his mind must have gone back to the forests of Maine and the deadly march to Quebec.

Deserted by his wife, his child no longer prattling in his arms, at that moment he was the loneliest man in all the world. And this was his reward—to hide the mirrors that would reveal his face, to wear the insignia of tyranny, to be avoided by children and have no one kind enough to plead for him at God's bar of eternal justice.

Slowly at last the fated traitor turned away. It seemed that the wraith of the gallant Andre had peeped into the room. He steadied himself for a minute at the table, and then sank into a chair. Opening a drawer, he drew some papers toward him and was soon buried in their contents.

A footstep came up the stair. Arnold started and, taking a pistol from the drawer, hurriedly concealed it in his bosom. A low rap fell upon his ears, and he bade its maker enter. The portal opened, and Captain Cunningham stood before him.

There was a time when Arnold would have scorned to be seen with this despicable wretch, but now he had no choice. He must associate with his kind, and his kind was mostly those of his own level.

Cunningham bowed slightly and walked to where the traitor sat. Arnold's lip curled with old-time aversion. Not long before he had loudly declared that some day he would catch this wretch and swing him from a gibbet, but now——

"I have come, General," began Cunningham, "with my report."

"I am not aware that you are to make any report to me," replied Arnold.

"I have been ordered to make one, if I had any, by General Clinton."

"You are Captain Cunningham?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then proceed."

Cunningham shot Arnold a searching look.

"We have been troubled lately with secret enemies of the King. I have ferreted one of the most dangerous of the lot."

"Then you should be commended," voiced the traitor.

"There lives in a house by the river one Prevost Grahame, who is in league with the enemy. This man is dangerous insomuch that he is subtle, daring, and bitter. I want an order for his arrest."

"From me?"

"Yes, General."

"Methinks such orders should come from General Clinton."

"But I have orders from him to place the matter in your hands, inasmuch as you have been acquainted with the offender."

A scowl darkened Arnold's face. Yes, he knew Prevost Grahame. He had seen him inside the American lines, and he doubted not that he was still loyal to the cause of freedom.

Cunningham threw a letter upon the table which the traitor picked up and read in silence. The signature of General Clinton was appended to the message.

"It is all right," he said, looking up. "You have authority to arrest Prevost Grahame."

"And the girl?"

"Is there a girl in the case?"

"His ward, General, and really the more dangerous of the two."

"Women can be dangerous when they will," answered Arnold, with a faint smile on his thin lips. "But how is the girl dangerous?"

"She is a spy. She was at Sir Henry's bal masque last night——"

"In the capacity of a spy?"

"Yes."

"Then I give you authority to include the girl in the apprehension."

A gloating leer leaped up in Cunningham's eyes. With a slight salute the jailer of New York went toward the door.

"No violence to the young woman," advised Arnold. "As for Prevost Grahame, you may use your own pleasure."

Halfway down the staircase Cunningham paused.

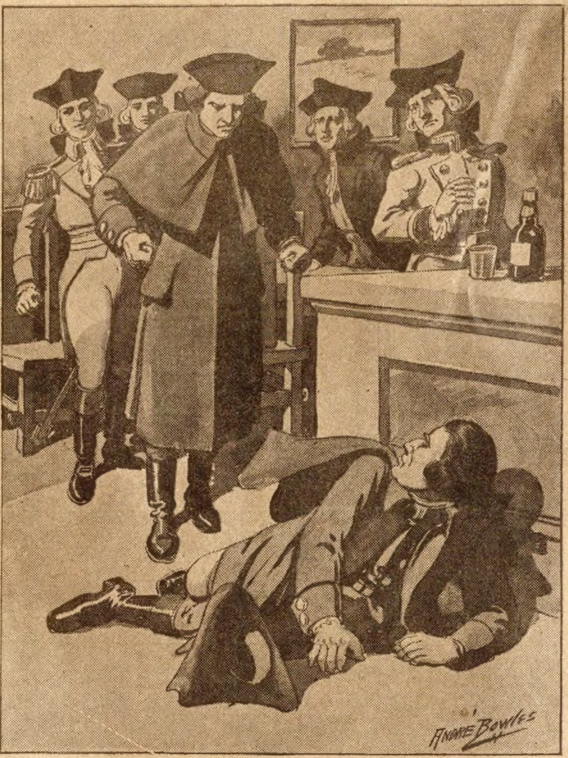
"By George!" muttered the wretch, "they call me 'Tiger' Cunningham, and maybe I deserve the name, for I whip my Rebel prisoners and chain them to the floor, but thank Heaven, I am no Benedict Arnold!"

The traitor went back to his work. Once he laid his hand on the overturned mirror as if he would consult his appearance, but he did not move it.

Scarcely had Cunningham departed ere the door swung open without a knock, and a woman, accompanied by a dog, entered the room. She was willowy and French in appearance, a woman past twenty, with laughing eyes and cunning, not to say mystery, in her mien.

The dog at sight of Arnold ran to one corner, where he crouched and showed his fangs. He was displeased. Had it come to this? Not only was the traitor to his country hated by men, but he was despised by dogs as well.

"Monsieur General," cried the woman, taking from her pocket a leathern dice-box, "I have come to tell your fortune." And the ivory cubes rattled on the table.



"Take my compliments!"

"I once told Major Andre's fortune. You knew him? Ah, yes, General. A brave but unfortunate soldier who died——"

The hand of the traitor shot suddenly upward.

"I want no test of your skill," he growled to the seeress. "I don't believe in such things. I——"

"Look!" broke in the woman. "See! Look at the pairs, General. I shake them once more. Aha! Dark days coming. The dice are against you, General."

Benedict Arnold sprang to his feet with a furious oath.

"Get out!" he roared, and his voice might have been heard on the pave below. "Leave me, witch! I want none of your charlatanism; and take yon hell-spawned beast with you!"

The fury in the traitor's eyes made the little fortune teller recoil.

"Pardonez, General," she said, showing her teeth in a grin. "Major Andre did not treat me this way when I read the language of the stars to him."

"To perdition with you and all your kind! Get out before I throttle you!"

There was a quick retreat to the door, and the dog, with another growl at the man of infamy, followed his mistress.

"Don't take it so hard, Midas," consoled the seeress, addressing her companion. "You're better any day than General Arnold."

Once more the traitor went back to his seat. The papers on the table had no interest for him now. He swept them into a drawer and sank moodily back into the chair.

The wind outside grew higher. The shutters rattled more than ever. The fire in the grate threw grotesque shadows on the wall, and, strange to say, one of them resembled a gallows. It caught the eye of Arnold. Was it the gibbet upon which the noble-hearted young Andre had perished? At least the traitor must have thought so, for he crossed the room, and filling a glass with liquor, swallowed it at a single gulp.

"If 'Tiger' Cunningham harms the girl I'll have it out with him," he exclaimed. "They don't treat me right here. They don't value my services to the King." And all the while the snow, beating a tattoo on the window, seemed to say, "Andre! Andre!" till the sounds sank like a knell into the traitor's heart.

CHAPTER VI.

CHAMPE.

DOROTHY, after her escape from Colonel Simcoe of the Queen's Rangers, hastened home. She knew but little of La Belle Lanore, but her gratitude was not lessened on this account. She had seen the woman once in conversation with Prevost Grahame, and felt that her heart was in the cause of liberty, for no people came to the house by the river but those who hated the King.

There was no doubt in her mind that the attempted arrest by Simcoe had been brought about by Captain Cunningham and Vesta Telle, and she opined that from this moment she would have bitter enemies in these two conspirators. To many it was no secret that she was a Rebel, although she did not flaunt her predilections in public, for it was not judicious in her to make an open avowal. Time would come, she ardently hoped, when she could come out fairly and proclaim her politics, for her belief in the ultimate triumph of freedom's cause was strongly founded. It was a house built upon a rock.

She told Grahame everything. The patriot listened closely to the end of her narrative, and then his face lit up with a smile.

"You surely were in the lion's lair," said he, the smile lingering. "Some day we will best this beast, and then—then we will be a nation without a king."

"It all came about by Vesta Telle," asserted Dorothy, with a woman's confidence.

"Doubtless," was the answer, and Grahame turned to the table and picked up a document which he examined carefully.

"I am waiting for an answer to my signal," he suddenly went on, turning to the silent girl. "It must have been seen. Tonight perhaps the word will come."

She did not ask him what he meant, for she never sought to know his secrets.

"Do you know Doctor Le Garde?"

"I have seen him."

"Well, girl, this man has turned against us."

There was bitterness and hatred in Grahame's tones.

"I never trusted the man far," he resumed. "To me he was not the person to be custodian of patriotic plans. You say you have seen him?"

"Often enough to know him by sight."

"What think you of this?"

Grahame took a letter from the secret drawer and held it out to Dorothy.

"Heavens!" cried the girl, after a moment's perusal. "Was there ever such audacity as this?"

"Men of his ilk are always audacious," smiled Grahame. "So you do not wish to become Mistress Le Garde?"

Dorothy flushed to the temples.

"The wife of that man? Never!"

Grahame arose and paced the room thoughtfully. His brow was clouded.

"What if I should command you to take him for life?" he suddenly asked, whirling on his heel. "What if I should desire you to become Mistress Le Garde?"

"You will never do that?" Dorothy was on her feet with a white face and outstretched hands. "Spare me this sacrifice. Ask anything else of me—even to the life I love. The wife of Doctor Le Garde, who is known as Dr. Satan? Father! father——"

"I was only testing you, child," interrupted Grahame. "Sooner than see you at the altar with him, I would open your veins and bury you."

Her eyes lit up with thankfulness.

"Years ago I met this man," continued Grahame. "A strange fate brought us together, a fate I need not mention here. I thought I had lost him forever, but we meet once more and in New York. This man has plundered me. He has taken a secret which I was zealously guarding from the world. I am sure of this, for it is a secret which no other man would seek."

"Then he has been here?"

"Not in this house, child. The secret was not kept here. I had intrusted it to a certain person whom I thought would guard it with his life. But Peter Prill did not do so. I could have slain the man who let the thief come and carry off the treasure. What a fool I have been! Now I must look to you to regain possession of that which I have lost.'

"You have but to command me," cried Dorothy. "I am, as you know, devoted to your service. What shall I do?"

"Doctor Le Garde lives on Upper Broadway. You shall have his number presently. You will go to his abode; you will play any hand that suits you, but I must have the stolen packet."

"It shall be yours again, cost what it may on my part!"

"I like that."

"When shall I begin?"

"Not till tomorrow," said Grahame. "Now go to bed, dear, and prepare for the ordeal."

He bent over Dorothy and kissed her white temples, then bade her good night, and she slipped away.

Grahame fell into his chair and his face went alternately red and white. Suddenly he sprang to his feet and threw on his cloak. It was past midnight. There were few sounds in the street now, and they came from the rumbling of a vehicle. The night was dark; but few stars lit up the sky and these seemed to shine coldly over the foe-guarded city.

Pacing down the street Grahame met no one. There was a scarcity of sentinels, but from afar came the call, "All's well!" from an unseen musketeer. All New York did not sleep.

The strange man passed on till he reached a building which had in one of the lower windows a little light which looked like a dying taper. Grahame paused and watched it. Presently he sprang up the steps in front of the house and entered, for it was not locked. His footsteps gave forth no sound in the darkened hallway.

He found a door to his right, which he opened, and entered a small room which was deserted. The light he had seen was burning on a table and fitly illuminated the apartment.

"Not at home, eh?" he said, seating himself. "Well, I have the end of the night before me and can wait."

An old-fashioned clock on a mantel ticked dolorously, a mouse came out of its hole and, seeing Grahame, darted back as if he were a cat on the watch.

"Ah!" cried Grahame to the little animal, "would to Heaven you were Benedict Arnold!" And the old flash came back to his eyes.

All at once the door opened, and the man who came in started slightly at sight of his visitor.

"I've had a run for it," he said, as his eyes twinkled, "but it takes a man like me to outwit the redcoats."

"None can do it better," responded Grahame. "You have come from the other side of the river?"

"From Washington."

"And there was a gantlet to run?"

"Yes. I told Mag that she might keep a light in the house to make believe that the old rat was in his nest."

"It was a good idea. Was my signal seen?"

"It was seen, and the leaven is working."

"Who will come?"

"Champe."

"And pray who is Champe?"

"A sergeant in Green's Legion, one of the bravest and coolest men in the American army."

"He must be cool if his mission is what I take it to be."

The man who had entered the room divested himself of the white beard he wore, and now appeared as a man of thirty.

"We have everything ready but the boat, but we will let Champe secure that. What is Champe to do?"

"He is to enlist in Clinton's army. That is the beginning of his work.

"And the finish?"

"The capture of the traitor."

Grahame rubbed his hands gleefully.

"When will Champe come?" he asked.

"Within forty-eight hours."

"It will seem an age, but those who toil must wait."

"And those who wait triumph in the end," answered the other, who was known as Valcross.

"I will go back now. I can sleep now that I know we shall avenge the greatest treason of all the years."

A minute later he was on the streets once more.

"Why not look at the nest of the she vulture?" he muttered to himself, pausing in front of an elegant house. "She may not have retired after her guestship at Sir Henry's ball."

The house was still well lighted; the great windows, but partly shaded, did not hold from him the glitter of a chandelier, nor obscure the rich furnishings beyond them.

Vesta Telle had one of the best appointed homes in the city. Her wealth enabled her to keep it up atfer the manner of a princess, and among the adherents of the King she was a princess in her beauty and regality.

Grahame drew near the mansion and hid in his cloak all but his observing eyes. An oak before the house screened him from observation. He seemed a part of the tree, so immobile did he stand among the sheltering shadows.

Presently the door with its blazoned crest opened, and a man stepped forth. The light was full in his face. Grahame's hand seemed to leap beneath his cloak. His teeth came together with a vicious snap.

"Not now," said he under his breath. "I'll let Dorothy try her hand first, and if she fails, then, Doctor Satan, you deal with Prevost Grahame!" and his eyes followed the man till he was out of sight.

CHAPTER VII.

AN UNWELCOME CUPID.

PREVOST GRAHAME of late had become possessed of a desperate purpose. It haunted him day and night. Patriotic to the core, insanely devoted to the cause of American freedom, his one idea ate its way into his soul like a consuming cancer. He was known to many as the "Mysterious Man." Whence he came, or who he really was, was a secret which none had ever penetrated. He lived alone with the girl whom he called his ward. They had few visitors, even from among those who knew his sentiments, for, wrapped in the mystery that surrounded him, he was repellent, yet in his breast beat the heart of a true man.

His absorbing ambition was the capture of Benedict Arnold, and the sending of him to Washington that he might be dealt with according to his infamous deeds. To this one end he bent every energy, and had sent his plans to the American camp, where they had been adopted. This desperate plot, doomed alas! to failure, as we shall see, never left its author's mind. The return of Valcross had filled his soul with renewed hope. Champe had been detailed for the enterprise, Champe, the man who was to go down into history for his sacrifice and bravery.

Grahame knew he was plotting in the shadow of the gallows, but what of that? He was willing to perish if he could accomplish his purpose. He would leave to Dorothy a recollection of which she would be proud, for he had trained her to emulate his actions.

The beautiful Rebel of New York was deeply attached to the man to whom she owed so much. He had been more than father to her, and although she felt that some mystery belonged to her birth, she did not try to draw it from the locked chambers of Grahame's heart. It was his secret, and she would always respect it.

There was in the camp of Washington a young soldier named Carroll Lee. In happier times he had won her love, but the fate of war had separated them, and his letters breathing of an undying devotion had, of necessity, become infrequent.

Eager to serve her guardian and the cause she loved at one and the same time, Dorothy, as we have seen, promised to ingratiate herself into the good graces of Doctor Satan for the purpose of obtaining the packet which had been stolen from Peter Prill. It was a rash venture, as she well knew, for Le Garde was a villain of the blackest dye, and it was not strange that he had cast his fortunes with the King while covering his intentions by pretending to be a patriot.

Menaced by Vesta Telle and Cunningham, who had become plotters against her, Dorothy saw that the shadows were gathering about her. More than this, she was aware that the single purpose that animated Grahame might at any time hasten his doom, but this, dark as it was, only rendered her truer to the cause of liberty, and she came out of her reflections stronger than ever in her desires, purified in the fires of peril.

She had carefully laid her plans for a visit to Doctor Le Garde's abode when she was startled by a heavy rapping on the door. Grahame was out on one of his strange absences, and she was the sole occupant of the house by the river.

Running to the window that looked out upon the street, Dorothy drew the curtain aside and beheld "Tiger" Cuningham on the stoop. The King's jailer was attired in a half-uniform, and looked impatient. There was eagerness in his baleful eyes. Dorothy for a moment felt her heart beat fast, but recovering courage, she darted into the hallway and opened the door.

Cunningham doffed his hat and stalked forward. The sang-froid of this wretch went like a dart to every part of Dorothy's being. He had come for no good purpose. Passion clung to him like ivy about the forest oak, and he was a man to be feared and dreaded by everything that was good. He might have seen that the girl was trying to hide her disgust, but with a lofty head he stopped and looked her over with evil mien.

"This way, Captain Cunningham," said Dorothy, beating back her real feelings and laying her hand on a knob within her reach. "You are an unlooked-for visitor——"

"Doubtless, Mistress Dayne," he interrupted, once more surveying her. "It is somewhat of a habit of mine to come at unexpected hours."

Into the room he went with the filth of the street on his heavy boots and shrugging his shoulders like a giant. Dorothy followed at his heels, closing the door behind her, and not for a moment taking her eyes from his hated form.

"Where is Master Grahame?" said Cunningham, whirling suddenly upon her.

"He is out."

"When will he return?"

"He left no word with me when he left the house."

"He is as slippery as an eel," smirked the redcoat jailer.

There was no reply to this observation.

"I am fortunate in finding you at home," continued "Tiger" Cunningham. "At least there is one bird in the nest and a fair one at that."

Her color rose instantly.

"I trust you enjoyed yourself at Sir Henry's fete. But you left too soon for the grand ball."

"I was overstaying my time," lied Dorothy, wondering what would be the scoundrel's next move.

"I observed that your flitting was hurried, and that General Clinton missed the presence of his beautiful guest."

His words stung.

"I will apologize to General Clinton if necessary," and Dorothy's words sounded like the snapping of a whiplash.

"My dear," continued "Tiger" Cunningham, coming nearer, "the absence of your guardian gives me the opportunity of my life."

Dorothy backed away.

"I have long looked upon you as one who can make me the happiest man in the world. Captain Cunningham has a heart as well as those who may call themselves his betters. He will not always serve his king in the capacity in which you now find him. In fact, my dear, he is about to be assigned to more pleasing duties, and promotion awaits him. You, my fair one, are the one of my adoration, the lady of my heart, and I have come to ask that you become my wife——"

Dorothy broke his sentence by recoiling with uplifted hand. Her face was ashen from indignation.

"Do I startle you?" cried Cunningham. "Is not a declaration of love expected at any time by a young lady, and especially by one of your beauty and worth?"

"This is entirely unlooked for," said Dorothy, when she found her tongue. "A declaration of love from Captain Cunningham is one of the surprises of my life."

"Indeed!" with a toss of his head. "I may be, in a sense, unworthy of your choice, but love is love, and the arrows of Cupid have long been buried in my heart."

Had this wretch really a heart? Was this man, hated even by those who employed him, capable of loving any one? Dorothy came to the rescue of her feelings. She saw that she could not meet this man halfway.

"Your proposition cannot be entertained," said she, firmly. "It is impossible, Captain Cunningham."

"What?" His eyes were coals of fire now. The passions of Clinton's jailer were at their flow. "Is it possible that you reject the offer I have just made?"

"You must have understood me." Her lips came together at each word. There was nothing evasive in her voice. The face, white a moment before, was at full flush. Her nails were bruising the pink palms, and her eyes were accentuating her resolution.

"Beware!" he exclaimed. "There is more than you wot of in refusing Captain Cunningham, who serves Cupid as gallantly as he serves his king."

"My decision is irrevocable. You will remember that this interview was unsought by me."

"Irrevocable, is it? Then you would not exchange it for the life of Prevost Grahame?"

There was a threat in his tones. His words had a vicious snap.

"My beauty," cried he, "you are placing the noose about the neck of the man who inhabits this house! You are sending him to the doom he merits; you are clouding your own sky, when with a word you might cause the sun to shine upon two lives."

"It is enough," Dorothy answered, the color deepening in her face. "I stand before you, Captain Cunningham, willing to take the consequences that may arise from my refusal to become your wife."

"Hell and furies!" was hissed in her face. "I am not here unarmed," and he tore from his pocket a paper which he unfolded before her. "Behold the signature of General Arnold——"

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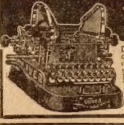

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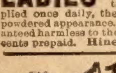

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"Benedict Arnold, the traitor?"

"Traitor though he be, he is now armed with the King's authority. He wears the King's uniform, though it has cost us dearly."

"Yes, the blood of Major Andre and four thousand pounds."

"By Jove! you're a Rebel, Mistress Dayne."

"Rebel I am. .Better a Rebel than the wife of General Clinton's Cerberus!"

Dorothy's words silenced "Tiger" Cunningham for a moment. The paper was thrust so suddenly into her face that she recoiled with a little cry.

"I have orders to arrest both Prevost Grahame and yourself for treason. I am the King's agent. What say you to this, Mistress Dayne? Read the document with your own bright eyes."

Dorothy pushed the extended paper from her.

"I take you at your word," said she. "I have no wish to see the signature of the man who sold his country for British gold."

"No?"

The girl seemed at that moment to increase an inch in stature.

"I am unfortunate in not finding Prevost Grahame here."

"You are to be congratulated upon his absence."

"So?" grinned Cunningham. "When the blow falls there will be less treason in New York than now."

He tramped toward the door with all the rage of a baffled Hun. He flung it open, and the last thing Dorothy heard was his curse in the hall.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TIGER MEETS HIS MATCH.

DOROTHY waited with much impatience for Grahame's return. The visit of Cunningham, coupled with his assurance, filled her with alarm for the future. The order of arrest was something not to be underrated. It told her that the British were weaving about her a net that would close ere long.

For all this she did not abate one iota of her patriotism. She loved the cause of liberty too dearly to be turned from it by threats, even though they emanated from General Clinton himself. Meantime Grahame did not come.

If she had followed Cunningham, she would have seen him enter the house occupied by Vesta Telle. The jailer of New York was still in a passion. He presented himself before the mistress of the mansion and showed by his look that he had met with a rebuff somewhere. That friend of the King was alone, and at sight of Cunningham she leaned forward and welcomed him with an anxious stare, as she waited for him to speak.

"I came away empty-handed," snapped the brute, his lips trembling visibly. "I did not find Grahame. There was no one in the house by the river but the girl."

"And your reception was not a joyous one?"

"I should say not," was the reply. "She is a veritable little vixen."

"And you let her cow you?"

"I had no liking for a continuance of the interview. But let me get my second wind," and he dropped into a chair and bit his lip.

Vesta watched him narrowly.

"What did you say that roused her?"

"Not very much."

"You made known your errand?"

"I produced the order of arrest. I thrust it into her face, and that smoothed the fur the wrong way."

"As well it might, Captain. You did more than that. I can see it in your eyes."

Cunningham shrugged his shoulders.

"I tried to transact a little private business," he answered, with a forced grimace, "but it wouldn't go."

"Why did you not wait for Grahame's return?"

"With that vixen before me? I'd sooner face a legion of armed Rebels."

"Before night the river house will be empty," said Vesta, with confidence.

"I'll have it watched."

"They may be gone even now."

Captain Cunningham sprang to his feet.

"I'll set a guard about it this very moment!" he exclaimed. "Think you that any one can escape my claws?"

Vesta did not reply.

"Let me see the order of arrest," she said, a minute later.

"Tiger" Cunningham produced the paper and handed it to her.

"Signed by General Arnold, I see," she spoke, looking up. "Why does Sir Henry impose such authority in a traitor?"

There was scorn for Arnold in the flashing eyes.

"He assured me that the order should go straight from him. I despise the murderer of Major Andre."

"No more than I do," snapped Cunningham. "I lowered myself when I obeyed the dog."

"Now, my dear captain," and the woman's voice sank a bar, "you will accept orders from me."

"That is better."

"You will see that these two people do not escape the net. Deal with each after your old manner. Rub the fur the wrong way whether they like it or not."

"Yes."

"Get them behind your bars as soon as possible. A Rebel project of some sort is on foot. I hear that the girl escaped Colonel Simcoe, that she was rescued by a masked woman who threatened the Colonel with a pistol."

"I can find that woman," said Cunningham.

"You know her, then?"

"She is called La Belle Lanore, another rattlesnake in the King's path."

"I thought as much," smiled Vesta. "Have a glass of wine ere you go."

The little eyes of "Tiger" Cunningham glittered eagerly. Vesta leaned back in her plush chair and studied his red face.

"No love-making with the girl," admonished the woman, at which the glass nearly dropped to the floor.

"Do I look like one in the snares of Cupid?" winced the Captain.

She laughed. Cunningham drew his cloak about his form and silently buttoned it. He was watched till his footsteps no longer sounded in the hallway, and then Vesta Telle arose and drank a glass of wine herself.

"Let me get the girl in my power," she said to herself, "and I'll crush her like an eggshell! Cunningham went too far with her. He lost his diplomacy. I doubt not he made an offer of love to her, for a pretty face is always his undoing."

Already Cunningham was far away. Everybody in New York knew the man. His reputation for cruelty to the unfortunate prisoners intrusted to his care was none of the best. More than one poor captive had died in his hands, and if their backs could have been seen, the stripes of his "blacksnake" would have heralded him more than monster.

Instead of returning to his retreat, he dropped in at a famous coffeehouse which was the abode of Tories and soldiers. Men fell back at his entrance.

"Hey, now, Captain!" cried a voice, and a big man at the bar showed that he had spoken.

"Hey yourself, Durless," responded Cunningham, "I want you."

All eyes were now turned upon the jailer, and when he drew Durless aside they followed him. A whispered conversation followed the meeting, and then "Tiger" Cunningham turned to the crowd.

He threw a silver coin upon the counter and told the master of the place to give those present a dole of liquor. At that moment the door swung open and a young man entered. He had a handsome face and the figure of an athlete.

"Step up and drink with the Captain," sang out a dozen voices, as the newcomer was discerned. "It's good royal liquor they keep in Master Bardell's establishment."

"Who is the Captain," quietly asked the young man.

Cunningham centered him with a sharp look.

"I am the Captain," said he. "I am called "Tiger" Cunningham, and many a Rebel back I've left my autograph on."

"To your eternal shame, sir."

That instant the face of Cunningham went purple.

He stammered as he talked.

"Perdition and its master!" he roared, with the voice of a cornered lion. "Who dares say that to my face?"

"I do, sir."

"And you?——"

"It is no difference who I am nor what name I bear," was the well-shot response. "I drink not to one who is no better than a Nero."

The crowd drew off. Such words were sure to make trouble. They were a goad to a rattlesnake.

"Stand off, comrades!" yelled "Tiger" Cunningham, as his hand sought the inside of his coat. "I am never without my badge of authority. I am commissioned to use it whenever I meet the proper subject. And by the souls of the saints! methinks I have found such now."

A long, thin whip came into view as he spoke, a whip formidable in its thinness, with a black handle and a lash as keen as a razor's edge. It emitted a sharp crack as it was whirled above its owner's head, and once more he cried to the crowd to stand back as he tested it on the Unknown's face.

But there was one as quick as the jailer of New York. Like an arrow from a bow, the young man shot forward, and ere the lash could descend, his clinched hand had planted itself squarely on Cunningham's jaw, and the monster reeled heavily against the wall.

"Take my compliments!" cried the assailant, drawing off a pace and contemplating his work. "I add them to the salary paid by the King."

It was some moments before the fallen wretch recovered. He sputtered in his insensate passion. A lion at all times, he was more than the king of beasts now. He was a volcano of fury when he regained his feet.

"Hold him, men!" almost shrieked Cunningham. "I'll mark his face with the royal crown, and on his back I'll grave the name of the heir apparent."

Meantime the young man had not recoiled. He was quietly waiting for his adversary. His deep blue eyes mirrored the coolness that possessed him.

"Very well," said he at last, as the King's agent did not impel himself forward. "We may meet again," and with this he stalked to the door with a farewell glance at the snarling scoundrel.

Once outside he laughed to himself.

"Only two hours in the lion's lair, and a bout with one of the cubs! What a story I will have to tell when I see Dorothy."

He was gone, and "Tiger" Cunningham was making the air blue with threats of vengeance.

(Continued next week.)

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Detective Grey's Coup

Or, The Horn of the Moon

By J. W. Lincoln

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CHAPTER XIII.

HASTENING to Mr. Ambler's side, Grey felt of his pulse, only to find it still.

"Couldn't be unconscious, could he?" whispered Marchmont.

"No, he is rigid," answered the investigator. Then his eyes wandered to the table where he saw an envelope addressed "Humphrey Grey."

Opening it with trembling fingers, the investigator drew forth a sheet of papyrus and read:

"Alpashar, the adept of whom I told you the other night, is avenged. His vengeance is the most devilish he could have devised—carrying off my daughter and ruining my name.

"This afternoon, I was arrested and taken to Norfolk Junction, where I was lodged in a cell and refused the opportunity to communicate with my friends, nor could I learn what the charge against me was.

"Just after dark, Alpashar appeared and made himself known, declaring that it was he who had arrested me. Then the arch-fiend, in a delirium of ecstasy, rushed into a recital of his revenge. From the day of his conviction at Bokhara, he declared, my fate was sealed. His minions dogged me constantly and learned all the secrets of my life. Every move I made was watched and reported to him. It was he who caused my trustee to squander my fortune, and when I retreated to 'The Horn of the Moon,' he sent his agents to watch me.

"Making his escape, he instantly set out for my abode. For a long time he studied it, living in a cave at the foot of the mountain. He learned that I was interested in working in gold and copper and over gems. Then his master idea came to him. From a striking resemblance to me, he impersonated me whenever it suited his fancy—which must have been often. Obtaining my signature, he studied it and wrote it until he could forge my name so that even I, myself, could not recognize any difference.

"Learning that I was intimate with J. Arthur Haines, he placed one of his devils in the First Federal Reserve Bank, in the commercial paper department. Then he had him learn to operate an aeroplane, finally establishing himself on "The Horn of the Moon' where he could watch the movements at my house. This done, he sent to Persia for the false pearls, and established his minions throughout the country.

"When my note for $500 appeared at the Federal Reserve Bank, his devil saw it—and the pearls deposited with Haines as security. You can imagine his fiendish glee. Unwittingly, I had played directly into his hands. His devil took the note and brought it by aeroplane to him. Quickly he changed the amount to $500,000, and sent more pearls to the bank, being assured by Haskell, his man, that Haines himself had authorized the loan to me and that no one in the bank would question it.

"He had the consummate nerve to compliment me upon the name for my concern, The Unique Jewelry Co., Ltd., and said it made things easier for him. Quickly he forged other notes, on common blank paper—here, again, I had played into his hands by using such a note—and sent them broadcast, accompanied by fortunes in worthless pearls, to be pledged as security.

"In his usual cunning way, he forged receipts from the New York customs house, but did not tell me how he obtained the originals.

"But my presence haunted him. He determined to get me out of the country—for he knew that sooner or later the forgeries would be discovered. So, trusting to my love of the necklace of pearls which he had tampered with, he sent me the communications concerning their return, in the hope that I would go to Bokhara. Then, the fiend intended to declare in some way the forgeries, and, as my absence would be learned, he would use it as proof of my guilt to Haines and the Government authorities.

"My refusal to go, however, upset his plans. Then Haskell informed him of the examiner's visit to the bank and the trouble over the note. From his agent in Washington he learned of the Comptroller's letter to you. He set his cleverest agents at work on you, a man, and Haskell, who dressed as a woman, frequently.

"Haskell, however, was frightened, and fled from New York to report to and consult with him. From his lookout, he beheld Haines arrive and depart. Then he decided to arrest me. He even forged a confession from me, and gloatingly read it to me, telling me that he had telegraphed the Comptroller at Washington that I had confessed and signed the name 'Nugent, S. S.,' a name he used when he wished to learn various Government secrets.

"In a paroxysm of joy, he told me he intended to liberate me, that I might learn what it was to face the world disgraced, as I had compelled him to do, unlocked my cell and vanished.

"I came home and found Helen gone. On her dresser was a note:

"'I take from you a woman to replace the one you took from me by forcing my conviction. You will be watched. If you make a move to recover of follow her, her life will pay for it. ALPASHAR.'

"I know the devil will keep his word. I cannot live without Helen. If I tried, I should search for her. I will not sacrifice her—but Humphrey, if you find this letter, as I am sure you will, rescue my child from Alpashar.

"I bequeath all my property to you, in trust for her. Take any steps you deem necessary to find Helen—and clear my name.

"FELIX AMBLER."

The spell of the Orient, its effect heightened by the barbaric furnishings of the den and the proof of its relentless vengeance, was upon Grey and Marchmont, and they trembled as they realized its far-reaching power.

Then the investigator shook himself, as though to throw off the spell. Pushing Marchmont before him, he closed the door.

"We can attend to this later. Now we must find Helen. Will your aeroplane carry a passenger?" he asked.

"Where do you intend to look for—"

"Never mind. Will it?"

"Yes."

"Then hurry. I want you to take me to 'The Horn of the Moon.'"

"It won't go that far," returned the aviator, in a tone which indicated he thought that the series of startling events had unsettled Grey's reason.

"Oh, yes it will. Quick!" And seizing Marchmont by the arm, he rushed him along the passage, through the trap panel, which he closed, and out to the field where Curry and the chief of police were standing guard over the aeroplane.

To check the questions their appearance was certain to evoke, the investigator said:

"Comptroller, don't ask explanations. Have the chief of police carry you to Norfolk Junction, then telephone to J. Arthur Haines. Tell him who you are, and ask him to come up here immediately. Then come back and stand guard over the house and servants. Don't let them talk, and don't be surprised at what they say. Here is the chance for you to show you can keep your mouth shut, chief. Marchmont and I are going to 'The Horn of the Moon.'"

While Grey had been talking, the aviator had started his motor, and Grey quickly took the passenger seat beside him.

"See that rocky peak up there, March?" he asked. "I wan't you to take me a hundred feet above it, then circle slowly around."

"Right-o. Sit tight."

And throwing in his clutch, the propellers whirred, the machine ran along the ground, rose gracefully into the air, then shot for the knob of "The Horn" like a bullet from a gun.

CHAPTER XIV.

OPEN-MOUTHED, the Comptroller and the chief of police watched the aeroplane ascend, saw it stagger as it reached an elevation above "The Moon," then steady itself and sail leisurely about.

"Come, we must go to the Junction," said Curry, and the two men started.

As the aeroplane circled high in the air, Grey took out his binoculars and stared down at the knob of "The Horn."

Plainly could he see a rocky plateau upon which rested another aeroplane.

"Can you land on that plateau?" he yelled, being obliged to repeat the question twice before Marchmont heard him.

A nod of affirmation answered him. The aviator touched a lever, and the aeroplane dipped downward.

"There's the machine I chased this morning!" shouted Marchmont, as he looked below. Yet he could not watch it long. There came a puff of smoke—and something rattled against the engines.

Like a flash, the aviator jerked another lever and another, and the aeroplane leaped upward.

"Bullet-proof! Latest French army invention!" yelled Marchmont.

Looking down again, Grey beheld puffs of smoke, this time two, but the bullets did not touch the machine, thanks to the leaps and plunges the aviator was making his aeroplane perform.

"What now?" shouted Marchmont.

While Grey was considering, the men in the air looked down and beheld two others rush across the plateau to the waiting aeroplane. Quickly they took their seats, and the machine bounded upward. Straight for Marchmont's aeroplane it sped, righted itself, and then came another puff of smoke—and again the rattle against the engines.

For an instant, Marchmont hesitated, then seized a lever, and the machine plunged downward with such rapidity that Grey almost fell out.

Like an eagle swooping on its prey, the aeroplane dived for the lower machine. Less and less grew the distance between them. Astounded by Marchmont's daring, the other aeronaut zigzagged, but Marchmont followed every move, drawing steadily closer.

Shutting his eyes—for each moment Grey expected the shock that would announce the collision—he prayed that Alpashar might be in the other machine. If they all went to death, then Helen would at least be free of him.

Suddenly the investigator felt the direction of the aeroplane change. Opening his eyes, he saw the other machine turning toward the south. He drew his revolver and fired. The shot went home, for one of the wings of the fleeing machine buckled, the aeroplane staggered, turned on its side, and shot downward, exploding and flying into fragments as it struck the earth.

"God!" cried Marchmont, then turned his machine and shot to the other side of the mountain.

Soon he turned again, sailed back, and gracefully dropped to the plateau—and the aeroplane came to a stop.

CHAPTER XV.

IT WAS with a consciousness of some one bathing his face and sobbing over him that Grey opened his eyes to behold Helen.

"Oh, Humphrey! It was terrible! Every mo——"

"There, there, Girl, don't talk about it," interposed Grey. "Rather think that I have found you and am going to take you—away from here," he ended lamely, remembering just in time the silent man seated in his den. "Are you all right?"

"Yes. But you came just in time. They were going to leave tonight. Did you find my message?"

"Yes. But first, who were the men in the other aeroplane?"

"Alpashar and a fellow he called Haskell."

"The wages of sin," quoted the in-

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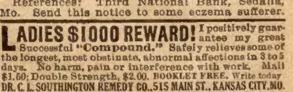

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vestigator, then checked himself and said:

"Now help me with Marchmont," for the aviator was still unconscious, due to the fact, Grey told Helen, that, in addition to the strain of the danger, he had the responsibility of guiding the aeroplane.

When several doses of brandy from his flask failed to bring the aviator to, the investigator became genuinely alarmed, for he could not manipulate an aeroplane, and the thought of being doomed to perish on "The Horn of the Moon" appalled him.

Evidently the same idea was in the girl's mind, for she exclaimed: "There is no need to worry for a few days, at least, Humphrey. There is plenty of food, and if Mr. Marchmont is—if anything has happened to him, surely they will get another aviator to come for us, for they know where you are—or started for."

"True. I'll carry Marchmont into the shade, and perhaps he will come to."

"We can take him into the cave. Oh, Humphrey, it is wonderful, full of all sorts of queer things and the most beautiful pearls I have ever seen!"

At the words, Grey smiled. "So we'll learn the trick—at last," he murmured, as he drew the limp body of the aviator from its seat, and guided by the girl, carried him within the cave.

Placing him on a superb rug, the investigator administered more brandy, then chafed Marchmont's wrists, being rewarded by a twitching of his arms.

"Good! He'll be all right after a rest. Now, tell me what happened to you."

"Mr. Haines came the morning after you left. He told father some one had forged his name to a note for a huge amount. Then he went away. Father told me about it at luncheon. Soon some one called—I don't know who it was—and the pater went away with him. He did not return for supper, and after eating, I went to my den. I was at my writing table, when I heard some one downstairs. I called to father, then, receiving no answer, I became afraid and started to write to you.

"Soon, I felt some one approaching, and tried to tell you where the pater's den was, for I knew you would be here soon, and thought you might find some clew there. I had only written a couple of words, when something was thrown over my head.

"Despite my struggles, I was borne from the room, downstairs, outdoors, and then felt myself going up, and finally stopping. Still covered, I was carried and placed on some rugs. Not until this morning did I know that I was in Alpashar's power—father had told me he had received a note from the man he had met in Persia—and that I was on 'The Horn of the Moon.'

"The scoundrels were badly frightened and began packing things. While they were at work, I saw your aeroplane. Unthinking, I called out. When Alpashar saw you, he went insane, yelling and cursing. Sending Haskell out to shoot at you, the Persian put on a leather jacket and thrust package after package of money into its pockets—it seemed all pockets—then ran out onto the plateau. He told me if I cried out to you that he would kill me—but I wasn't frightened. I knew you were near me. The rest you know."

"Now show me the pearls."

Taking an electric flashlight from among a pile of stuff, Helen led the way into a small recess in the cave.

As the ray of light flashed on the floor, Grey cried out in wonder. In piles a foot high were superb green, pink, blue, and purple pearls. Yet only for a moment did he gaze at them; his eyes had caught sight of other piles of smaller gems, and taking the flashlight, he picked up one, took his jeweler's microscope from his pocket, and examined it.

"Clever! Supremely clever!" he exclaimed. No wonder the customs experts were baffled by them. You know pearls are formed from countless scales deposited by the oyster to cover a piece of sand which has got into its shell and is the original cause of all pearls. These pearls are formed from scales, too. See!"

And picking up a tiny knife from the floor of the recess, he removed several of the scales from the unfinished pearls, his microscope revealing to him a fine green dust beneath the lowest layers, which evidently gave the color to the gems.

Search disclosed little piles of dust—green, pink, blue, and purple—and a heap of myriads of very tiny scales, which later analysis proved to be from some sort of fish. These infinitely little translucent scales by some secret process had been fused into shining pearls.

"Think of the work!" exclaimed Helen.

"True. But think of the reward—pearls that will baffle an expert, which can be sold or pledged for an infinite amount—literally an endless money supply! It's the cleverest——"

"I say, is any one here?" interrupted a voice.

"Marchmont!" exclaimed Grey, as both he and Helen started at the sound. "We'll be right with you, old man."

"So we were in time?" the aviator smiled, as he caught sight of the girl.

"You were—and I can never thank you—" she began, but Marchmont interposed. "Good! Don't try. And now let's get out of here before my nerve entirely leaves me. I've had enough of 'The Horn of the Moon.'"

"We'll go as soon as I've looked about a little more," returned Grey.

"Miss Ambler and I will go now," declared the aviator. "I'm coming right back for you. If you are not ready when I arrive, I'll leave you here." And he led the way to his aeroplane, tested it, started the motor, helped Helen to the passenger seat, mounted his own, and soared aloft.

Watching until he could no longer see them, the investigator returned to the cave. After gathering enough scales, dust, and pearls to prove his case, he searched among the heaps of luggage, finding a portfolio of papers and Alpashar's forging outfit and blank notes, and was just examining the papers when Marchmont hailed him.

Aware that he could return if more evidence were needed, Grey once more entered the aeroplane, and was safely landed in the field of the Ambler estate whence they started.

CHAPTER XVI.

HELEN had been to her father's den before they returned. Bravely but sadly she bore the shock, finding some relief in soothing and caring for the servants, all of whom had recovered, while Grey and the other men attended to all the necessary arrangements and formalities. But the investigator refused, however, to talk about the case, pending the arrival of Mr. Haines, who had informed the Comptroller that he would arrive by special train.

The interval Grey passed in inspecting the papers he had brought from the cave, which proved to be Alpashar's secret correspondence, and gave a list of his agents and disclosed the fact that he was on the point of extending his swindles throughout the world.

In mid-evening, Mr. Haines arrived, and they all went into conference.

"First, let me tell you what I know," suggested the banker. "Then we will listen to Mr. Grey." And, as this plan met the approval of the others, he resumed. "Felix Ambler and I were old and dear friends. As you know, his hobby was working in gems and gold. After he lost his money, I did not hear much from him until one day he came to my bank and told me he had conceived the idea of forming a company to be called The Unique Jewelry Company, Limited.

"As he needed a little money to finance it, and I approved the idea, I honored his note for $500, taking pearls, genuine pearls of his own, as security.

"You can imagine my surprise, Comptroller, when your man produced Felix's note for $500,000. I tried to bluff the matter through with your examiner, and, once free of him, I came up here to see Felix about it. He satisfactorily proved his innocence to me, and was as much distressed as I was.

"Leaving him, I determined to reimburse the bank from my own pocket. Before I could get in touch with you, Comptroller, I learned of the other swindles.

"I instructed my son, if question were made concerning the Unique Jewelry Co., Ltd., to say, just as I had said, that it was a New York and London concern, and to refuse any further information, except that the concern was solvent.

"When you called on him, Mr. Grey, you frightened him. He did not know how much you knew, and was afraid he might make a bad matter worse, which explains his discourteous treatment of you.

"Naturally, a quiet investigation was being made in my bank, and it was soon learned that one of the note clerks, Haskell, was missing; that he had, in fact, come up here on the very train you and the Comptroller took to Norfolk Junction. His description has been sent broadcast. It is only a matter of time before he is arrested. Then we may learn the truth of the swindle. But Felix Ambler was innocent of any wrongdoing!"

Waiting only until the effect of Mr. Haines' words had fully reached the others, Grey began his story. In amazement, his auditors listened, at first skeptical, but deeply moved by the letter left by Ambler, then thrilled by the account of the aerial battle, with the frightful end of Alpashar and his accomplice, finally convinced of the truth of the extraordinary narrative when the investigator produced the scales, dust, and pearls from his pocket.

After selling the estate, Helen went to London to live with an aunt. The money obtained by the swindle was never recovered, and from Helen's statement that Alpashar had packed his jacket with bills, it was concluded that the bulk of it, at least, was lost with him, for his body was never discovered. None of the Persian's agents were heard of, save Haskell, who had met his fate with his master.

But the Comptroller was satisfied with Grey's solution of the case.

The End.

* * *

His Choice.

The Irishman in France had been challenged to a duel. "Shure," he cried, "we will foight wid shillelahs."

"That won't do," said his second. "As the challenged party, you have the right to choose the arms, but chivalry demands that you should decide upon a weapon with which Frenchmen are familiar."

"Is that so, indade," returned the generous Irishman; "then we'll foight it out wid guillotines."

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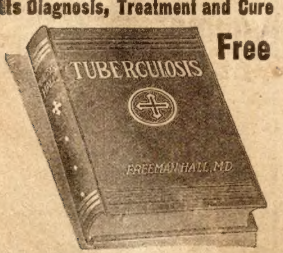

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Unsuccessful.

Drug Clerk—"Did you kill any moths with these moth balls I gave you?"

Disconsolate Customer—"No. I tried for five hours, but I couldn't hit a one."

A Patient Dentist.

Victim—"Mercy! That isn't the right tooth you've pulled."

Dentist—"Be patient, madam; I'm coming to it."

OLD MAN BRAGG CATCHES ONE.

Perhaps.

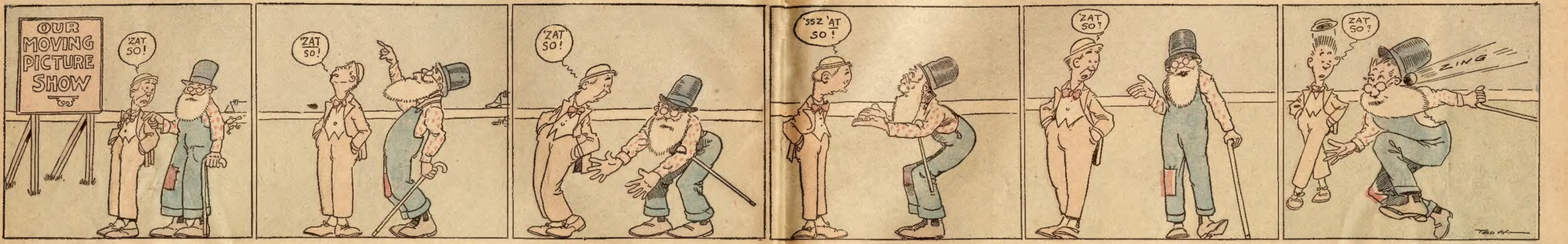
Mother (reading)—"It is always damp where they raise mushrooms."

Little Lola—"Is that why they look like umbrellas?"

An Alarm.

He—"I hope there will never be any coldness between us, dear."

She—"But, George, there will have to be at any ice cream table."


OUR MOVING PICTURE SHOW
'ZAT SO!
'ZAT SO!
'ZAT SO!
'SSZ 'AT SO!
'ZAT SO?
ZAT SO?
ZING
Ted H—

Old Man Bragg—"Yessir! Right on this here spot we used to play ball, when I was young——

"An', by Jupiter, we used to knock 'em clean over that big elm tree!——

"An' here's where I used to play second base, an', believe me, I could move about some——

"An' we didn't have no padded gloves an' fancy un-e-forms, either——

"An' speed! Why, you boys nowadays ain't got no speed as compared to what——

"Ouch! Hellenblazes! I'm hit by a bolt of lightnin'! Git a doctor!"

In Five Days.

One of the bosses at Baldwin's locomotive works had to lay off an argumentative Irishman named Pat, so he saved discussion by putting the discharge in writing. The next day Pat was missing, but a week later the boss was passing through the shop and he saw him again at his lathe. Going up to the Irishman, he demanded, fiercely:

"Didn't you get my letter?"

"Yis, sur, Oi did," said Pat.

"Did you read it?"

"Sure, sur, Oi read it inside and Oi read it outside," said Pat, "and on the inside yez said I was fired, and on the outside yez said, 'Return to Baldwin's locomotive works in five days.'"

Slight Mistake.

"I believe Fanny is making me an afghan," said the youth. "I was calling there last night, and she was working on it; but she wouldn't tell me who or what it was for."

"She told me. It is for you, but it is not an afghan. It's one of a pair of ear tabs."

Crooks the Knee.

"I despise a hypocrite."

"So do I."

"Now, take Jackson, for example, he's the biggest hypocrite on earth."

"But you appear to be his best friend."

"Oh, yes. I try to appear friendly toward him. It pays better in the end."

Getting Help.

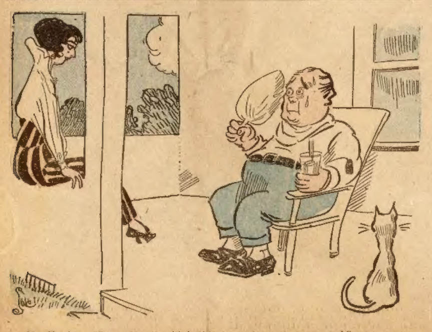
"Did you stop in the employment agency to get a cook?" asked Mrs. Crosslots.

"Yes," replied her husband, gloomily. "Eight of 'em looked me over and decided that I wouldn't do."

A Permanent Job.

"It's lucky I should meet you, Smith. There's a little bill you owe Timkins, the tailor; he's commissioned me to collect it."

"Has he, old man? Well, I'm glad you've got a permanent job at last."



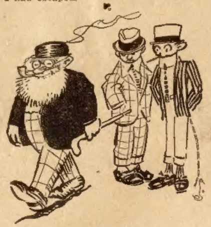
Mr. Hayley—"Some day they'll build bungalows that are cool."
Bright Wife—"Yes, they could use ice cream bricks."

Their Meeting.

"My first wife was a widow when I met her."

"Tell me about it. How did you happen to meet her?"

"I saw her coming and started around a block, but she doubled back the other way and popped out from behind a corner when I was just beginning to think I had escaped."



Bill—"So that old chap hasn't been out of this town but once since he was born?"

Hank—"Yes, when he was 10 he ran away to sea and didn't come back till he was 60!"

Cured.

"And has this famous doctor cured your friend of the hallucination that she was sick?"

"Oh, completely. She's really sick now."

For a Happy Marriage.

To render a marriage happy, the husband should be deaf and the woman blind.—Proverb.

Liked Him.

A teacher in a school in a Yiddish section of New York was trying to find from a tiny boy the name of his father. He seemed quite unable to think of it, so to help him she asked: "What do you call him?"

"I call him 'father,'" was the reply.

"Well, what does your mother call him?" And the response, an eloquent comment on domestic relations in the neighborhood, was:

"She doesn't call him anything—she likes him."

Did He Mean It?

One of the men in a certain company of the militia made a disparaging remark about the man in front of him. The victim turned with indignation and assumed a fighting attitude. Then the Captain remarked sharply:

"That will do there. We do not want any fighting men in this regiment."

The Laziest Man.

"Noodles is the laziest man I know. He has an invention fixed so that by merely pulling a wire in bed he can light the fire; but that doesn't seem to improve matters."

"Why not?"

"He's too lazy to pull the wire."

A Moment of Weakness.

"Alas!" confessed the prisoner. "In a moment of weakness I stole the piano."

"In a moment of weakness?" exclaimed the judge. "Goodness, man! What would you have taken if you had yielded in a moment when you felt strong."

A Little Too-Too.

Mrs. Newrich—"Show me something in what they call high art."

Picture Dealer—"Here, madam."

"What's the price?"

"Five thousand dollars."

"Oh, that's too high."

Resentment.

"I hope," said the terrier, deferentially, "that you are not mad."

"No," replied the collie; "I'm not mad. I am merely indignant at this custom of calling each summer's 'silly season' the 'dog days.'"

A Modern Recluse.

Friend—I haven't seen you for some time."

Poet—"No; fact is, I have become a good deal of a recluse lately."

Friend—"I feared as much. How much do you owe?"

Reassuring.

"This beach looks rather dangerous," remarked the timid bather. "Don't people get drowned here very often?"

"No, madam," replied the life guard. "No one ever gets drowned here more than once."—Judge.

No Relief.

The cynical person was standing in front of a part of an exhibition of local art talent labeled "Art Objects."

"Well, I suppose Art does object, and I can't blame her, but there doesn't seem to be any help for it," he finally said.

Knew the Brother.

Struggling Pastor—"Brother Skinflint intends to give our new chapel a beautiful memorial window."

Wife—"He probably wants something to look at when the contribution box goes around."

Too Much Soup.

The most popular feature of the menu for dinner had been soup, of which the little girl had partaken heartily.

"Dear me," she sighed, as she went on with other things. "I've eaten so much soup that every time I swallow a piece of bread I can hear it splash."

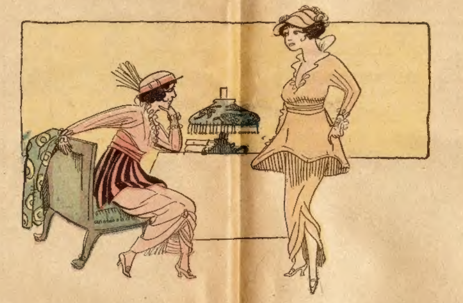
Stranger—"Do you know a man around here with one leg named Jones?"

Native—"What was the other leg named?"

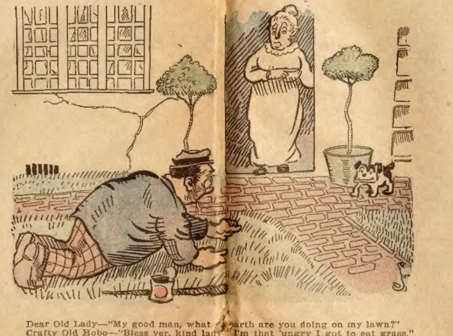
Soon Faded.

"By Jove, I am glad to see you looking so gay and festive!" said Mr. Olde Friend. "You were all in black the last time I saw you."

"Yes," demurely replied Mrs. Brown, who had just taken a second husband; "but it wasn't a fast black."



Dolly—"I love and I am loved."
Molly—"Then you must be perfectly happy."
Dolly—"But it isn't the same man!"



Dear Old Lady—"My good man, what [illegible]arth are you doing on my lawn?"
Crafty Old Hobo—"Bless yer, kind lady. I'm that 'ungry I got to eat grass."
Dear Old Lady—"If you go around to the back you'll find the grass grows much longer and thicker there."

Wanted to Help.

Mrs. Black woke her husband one night and whispered:

"Larry, there's a burglar in the parlor! He just bumped against the piano and struck several keys!"

"Is that so?" said Larry. "I'll go right down there."

"Oh, Larry," whispered the excited wife, "don't do anything rash!"

"Rash!" replied the husband. "Why, I'm going to help him. You don't suppose he can move that piano from the house without assistance, do you?"

No Argument.

"What's the shape of the earth?" asked the teacher, calling suddenly upon Willie.

"Round."

"How do you know it's round?"

"All right," said Willie; "it's square, then. I don't want to start any argument about it."

Another Problem Solved.

Citizen (who likes homemade bread)—"My dear, I hear that the bakers' trust has rushed through a law forbidding women to make their own bread."

Wife (indignantly)—"They have, have they? I'll show 'em. Here, Maria, run out and get me some yeast."

Jones' Gift.

"I asked my friend Jones, who works for a typewriter company, to send me a cover for my typewriter."

"Did he send it?"

"Yes; he sent me an automobile coat with the words, 'To be worn over a peekaboo waist.'"

Puzzled.

"I'm puzzled about this custom of eating to music."

"How's that?"

"I can't understand whether the food is intended to keep your mind off the music or the music is intended to keep your mind off the food."

A la Mode.

"My wife is always complaining she has nothing to wear."

"Great Scott, fellow! What on earth is she kicking about? Get to her quick and tell her she's right in style and doesn't know it."

Hard Questions.

Mrs. Short—"How do you expect me to buy things for you to eat if you don't give me any money?"

Mr. Short—"And how do you expect me to earn money for you if I don't get anything to eat—say?"

No Sympathy.

"Madam, the feather in your hat is getting in my eye," exclaimed a man in a crowd."

The woman turned around, looked him over, and then inquired, "Why don't you wear glasses?"

Accommodating.

Muggins—"Young Goldspoon has money to burn."

Guggins—"That's why so many girls' mothers are trying to make a match for him, I suppose."

The Diplomat.

She—"Have you any special reason for wanting to know my age?"

He—"I merely wished to know at what age a woman is really the most fascinating."

Seemed Necessary.

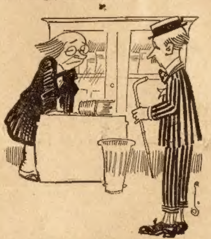
"Mother," said little Mabel, "do missionaries go to Heaven?"

"Why, of course, dear," her mother replied.

"Do cannibals?"

"No, I am afraid they don't."

"But, mother," the little girl insisted, "if a cannibal eats a missionary, he'll have to go, won't he?"



Lawyer (to hesitating client)—"Revenge is sweet, remember! We'll fight this case to the bitter end!"

Client—"But who'll get the bitter end—the other fellow, or me?"

His Opportunity.

He—"Don't forget, my dear, that the hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world."

She—"Well, come and rule the world for a bit, my dear."

An Impediment.

"Money talks."

"I know, but my husband has an impediment in his income."

Too Popular.

Needing some ribbon one day while in a very small Southern town, we went to the one store there.

"Ribbons?" questioned the storekeeper. "Well, we-all just mislaid our stock of ribbons, but if you-all come back later I'll see if I can find them."

So back we went later. He had found them.

"What color did you-all want?"

"Blue," we replied.

"Oh, blue!" he exclaimed in disgust. "We haven't got any blue. Blue is so popular we don't even try to keep it."

Original.

A man wished to have something original on his wife's headstone and hit upon, "Lord, she was Thine." He had his own ideas of the size of the letters and the space between words, and gave instructions to the stonemason. The latter carried them out all right, except that he could not get the "e" in "Thine."

The Very Thing.

Mr. Bunsby—"If that young man's coming here to see you every day in the week you had better give him a hint to come after supper."

Miss Bunsby—"I don't think it's necessary, pa. That's what he comes after."

Like Own Brothers.

"Those two boys next door are quarreling all the time."

"That's so. If you saw 'em fighting together you'd never dream they were only half-brothers."

Doing His Part.

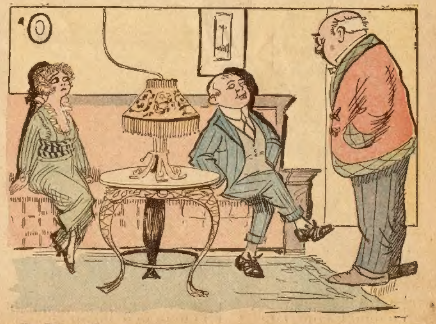
"What part are you taking in the war on flies?"

"I do sentry duty at the breakfast table over the milk pitcher every morning."

Both, Perhaps.

"Mrs. Muchwed has certainly had a very diversified life."

"You mean divorce-ified."



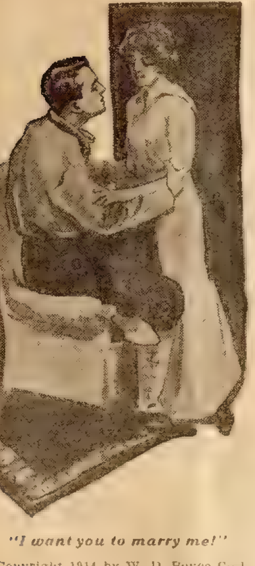
Her Father—"Young man, I shut up the house at 11:30 prompt."
Her Beau—"Very well, sir—I'll begin saying goodnight at half past 10."

Facing Mexican Perils

---Or,---

The Prisoner of Castle La Garcia

By Lucius Withers



"I want you to marry me!"

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE pursuing soldiers pressed hotly upon Constance and the young American newspaper man. At first the girl was too badly frightened to do more than allow herself to be dragged along by the man, but as she ran, her panic passed. Wilson noted that she dragged back no more, but ran swiftly along by his side. The girl, although she was still frightened, became possessed of a burning desire to outdistance these Mexicans simply for the sake of triumph. Ahead of them Wilson noted that a narrow alley cut away westward from the street down which they sped.

"We will dash down the alley," he panted.

By this time many persons had come out of their houses and joined, shouting in the mad chase.

"Americanos! Catch the Americanos!" they cried.

Wilson and Constance swerved down the alley; they ran about halfway through the little passage, and then darted into an open door or gate which led through a high board fence into a small back yard. The two crouched in a corner of the yard. Luckily no one came out of the house or noticed their presence, due probably to the fact that there was no one at home, else the noise of the chase would have attracted their attention.

The man and girl heard their pursuers run down the alley and out into another street. The shouting still kept up, but grew fainter. For a few minutes the pair crouched in their corner; then they stole out into the alley; it was deserted. Swiftly Wilson and Constance made their way to the street from which they had just fled. Still in the distance, they could hear the noise of the chase, though the shoutings were scattered, as if the runners were casting about for the trail.

The pair walked along the streets, traveling as rapidly as possible without exciting suspicion, until they came to the house at which they were stopping. They had about three-quarters of a mile to traverse. They saw no one along their way, as it was still the siesta period, and the excitement of the chase seemed not to have penetrated in this direction beyond the alley in which they hid.

Members of their host's family and old Zantillo were still asleep when the pair returned, but Constance and Wilson awakened them and related their experience. The Mexicans seemed much perturbed.

"It may mean that the soldiers will search the city," said the host. "If they do, it will be better for you to leave here at once. However, I do not believe that they will look for you; they gave chase probably more for the sport of running than anything else."

With this latter statement neither the reporter nor the girl could agree. Their pursuers had seemed too determined to catch them for them to hold any such belief.

As a matter of fact, no search of the city was made, probably because the soldiers thought that whoever the Americans were, they had simply been transients, passing through the city and leaving their automobile only long enough to look about the town. Consequently, the night was passed comfortably by the members of the party on their way from the capital to the coast.

They got away from Cordoba early on the following morning. Once out of the city, the two Americans climbed again on top of the load of hay. Within three hours, they had traveled over comparatively good roads back into the Aztec highway.

As they traveled along, the young reporter more and more felt that he was becoming inextricably caught and bound in the web of Constance Clemmins' charm, which she unconsciously spun every minute that they were together. Or was the spinning unconscious? This could truthfully be answered probably with both a "yes" and a "no." Beautiful women, and unbeautiful ones also, perhaps, cannot forego the delight of "trying themselves" out on any passably respectable man who comes within their ken. They are unconscious of it in a way, and very thoroughly conscious of it in another way. What woman with eyes that have anything to express, can withstand the temptation of volleying fascinating glances at a good-looking or manly man? If some one told these women that they were flirting they would be properly shocked, but—oh, well.

To Wilson's credit let it be said that he did not believe that Constance was aware of the ascendency that she was gaining over him. It never occurred to the young man that he was a chap that any woman, heiress or no, might be proud of bringing to subjection, or one whom a girl could quickly learn to love. There was nothing of the cad or sick Lothario about him. His upbringing and his experience of life had been along stern lines, and the man who meets the game of life squarely has little time to cultivate the fine art of egotism. These fellows are generally too busy doing something to think much of themselves. Of such was Henry Wilson, and of such, thank God, are most American men.

If he caught Constance now and then gazing at him with eyes that seemed particularly tender, or if he heard in her voice notes that might have been interpreted as those of unusual regard, he set these things down to her innate womanly tenderness and gratitude.

The party traveled that day many miles, and toward noon began to come to the tropic regions. Since midmorning the members of the party had noticed that the temperature was climbing, and by noon the sun was blazing down upon them in a blinding fury. The horses broke into a profuse sweat that soon covered them with thick lather and they panted painfully. The wagon was halted under a clump of trees a short distance from the road. The three climbed down from the wagon, and while Zantillo and Wilson loosened the harness and removed it from the animals' backs that they might have a good rest, Constance drew a hamper of food from where it rested at the back of the wagon, and spread out the midday meal. Zantillo went in search of water for the horses, and returned a few minutes later, saying that he had discovered a small pond a short distance away. The old man led the animals away, and in a short time returned and gave them feed. The three then fell upon the food and ate heartily, drawing their water supply from the big bottles which they had refilled at Cordoba. It tasted vapidly warm, but it quenched thirst, and that was the chief thing.

When she was setting out their lunch, Wilson noted the graceful, sure movements of Constance about her work, and thought that the gods could give him no greater blessing than to place this woman always close to him. The American almost found it in his heart to pity Lopez Fernandez, who had loved her so madly. Was it any wonder? Had there ever been any woman quite so lovely? Several times the young man caught up and stifled back his thoughts which were traveling in this direction.

They did not get under way again until after four o'clock, as the heat beat down upon the earth so terrifically that Zantillo deemed it unwise to subject the horses to its fury.

Now the wide highway began to fall toward lower levels, and the reporter knew that before long they would again come to the Central Swamps, probably early on the following morning. For the rest of that afternoon they traveled steadily eastward, meeting but few persons along the route. Those whom they did meet were simple farming folk and did not trouble them. Toward nightfall they came upon a small farmhouse set a few rods back from the road. Zantillo drew up before the place and hailed. A tall Mexican came to the door, and then out to the wagon. He held a short conversation with Zantillo. Constance explained to the newspaper man that the fellow had consented to entertain them for the night.

The young American eyed the Mexican carefully; something in the man's manner or bearing failed to excite the reporter's confidence. Was it the tall, stooping figure, the long, slender head, with eyes set close together and looking out upon the world with brief underglances? Or was it the forehead which slanted back precipitately, or the wide mouth, the thick underlip of which jutted outward in no pleasant manner?

The man explained that he and his brother, who was just at that time not at home, occupied the house of four rooms; they owned, he said, a little land about the house and cultivated it as best they could. The revolution had almost robbed him of a market for his crops.

The man accompanied them into the house, and a little later he and Zantillo stabled and fed the horses. Constance, with wise forethought, had brought one of the hampers of food inside with her. From the appearance of the man the girl had judged that she would rather eat from the hamper than of any food that he or his brother might prepare. Not much later the brother put in an appearance. His aspect was even more repellent than that of the other. The two were alike only in their appearance of evil and ferocity. While the elder man was tall and stooped, the younger brother was squat and squarely built. He had a great head, with wide, bulging brow and protuberant eyes. His legs were painfully bowed and set wide apart where they joined his torso. The reporter liked his looks no more than he liked the looks of his brother.

When the two men noted the generous supply of food in the hamper which Constance had brought in with her, they prepared only coffee for supper. To do them justice, it was good coffee, for he is a poor Mexican indeed who does not know how to make good coffee. The two men ate greedily of the food set before them by Miss Clemmins.

As their journey had been a tiresome one that day, the travelers toward Vera Cruz, except Wilson, retired early. The house consisted of four rooms, a kitchen and a hallway running through the center. The hall was used as a dining-room. Constance was assigned to the front room to the right, Zantillo to the room directly across from it, and Wilson to the room beside that occupied by the girl. The brothers occupied the room beside that of Pedro's father.

Constance and Zantillo were soon asleep, worn out by their hard day's travel. But the suspicion that had first entered the mind of the reporter, directly he had seen the elder of the brothers, grew upon him the longer he observed the pair. So, after he had been shown to his room and given a lighted candle, he did not undress and go to bed; instead, he blew out his candle, opened his door a trifle, and seated himself beside the crack. The reporter held his revolver in his hand. He determined that he would watch there until daybreak if necessary.

Strange to say, the night was not so warm as are nights generally in the tropics. After sunset a freshening breeze had sprung up, and it streamed steadily into the room. Now and then, as he kept his vigil, the young American could hear the distant howling of coyotes and the occasional stamping of the horses in the stable. The hooting of an owl betimes reached his ears. After awhile even these sounds grew still, and he heard only the wind fluttering about the corners of the house. For probably six hours the young man kept his watch. He was getting fearfully drowsy, and his limbs ached from the long days of travel and his unusual recent physical exp-

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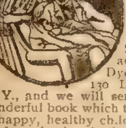

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riences, which had stretched now almost over a month.

He had fallen into a doze, when a low, creaking sound came to his ears. In an instant he was wide-awake and alert. The reporter knew that the sound had been caused by the opening of a door. Which door he could not tell. Very cautiously he opened the door to his room wider and peered out into the hallway. The light was so dim that at first he could distinguish nothing. Again the faint creak came to his ears; he strained his eyes through the gloom. He saw the door of the room occupied by the two brothers move slightly. The two men stepped cautiously into the hall. Wilson could make them out dimly; they were whispering together. The reporter drew his other revolver from its resting-place inside his shirt. He covered the two men. They began [illegible] toward his door.

"Stop!" [illegible] the American, in a [illegible] tone. The two men sprang forward. Wilson threw his door wide open. The pair saw that they were covered, and halted, almost upsetting themselves by the suddenness of their actions.

Constance, hearing the noise, hastily threw a wrap about her and hurried into the hall. At the same instant old Zantillo emerged from his room clad only in his trousers, which he had not discarded upon going to [illegible].

Wilson sent Zantillo out to the wagon [illegible]. Together they bound and trussed up the two men, after which Wilson said to Constance:

"I've been sitting up watching for those fellows. I want a little sleep. Tell Zantillo to guard them for the rest of the night: I'm worn out."

Constance translated, and Zantillo prepared to keep the vigil until morning. But the physical infirmities of age are heavy, and Zantillo must have slept at his post.

The reporter did not know how long he had slept after lying down fully dressed, but he was awakened by a slight scuffling sound. He sprang from his low bed and rushed out into the hall, a revolver in each hand. The two men had freed themselves from their bonds. They were strangling old Zantillo, whose weak kickings against the floor had awakened the American. Wilson cried out at the two men, and they straightened up instantly. The reporter was tempted to kill them as they stood, for the treacherous brutes that they were, but since coming to this God-forsaken land he had acquired a new horror of bloodshed, despite the fact that he had been obliged to kill.

Again Constance came out into the hall. Old Zantillo lay inertly on the floor—Wilson did not know whether they had killed him or not. He asked the girl to ascertain whether the old man still breathed. She examined Zantillo and declared that his heart was still beating. Wilson handed the girl the two pistols, telling her to keep the brothers covered while he tied them up again. This time he bound them beyond the peradventure of freeing themselves. The two men cursed as the drawn ropes bit into their flesh, but the newspaper man had no compunction. They were both of them treacherous dogs, deserving of any evil fate that might befall them. After tying the two Mexicans securely, Wilson and Constance turned their attention to resuscitating Zantillo. This they were able to do in a short time, as he had only been strangled into submission.

Through the windows Wilson and the girl noted that dawn was breaking in the East. Giving his revolvers to the resuscitated Zantillo and to Constance, the young man went out to the stable and fed the animals. When he returned he found Zantillo guarding the two Mexicans, while Constance was brewing coffee over the open fireplace.

After partaking of breakfast, the American hitched the horses to the wagon, and the party made ready to depart. They left the two Mexicans, bound and trussed up, in the back corners of the hallway to their home.

Old Zantillo, who was too weak to handle the reins after the attack upon him, had just been assisted to the top of the hay pile and Wilson was about to help Constance up, also, when they heard a low and rapidly rumbling sound approaching down the highway a short distance away. The reporter turned an astonished gaze on the girl.

"That's a motor-car!" he ejaculated.

CHAPTER XXIX.

PEDRO and Marvin Dannett, left in the City of Mexico, confronted what at first glance seemed a task that could not be accomplished, namely, the ferreting out and liberating two persons of whom it was not definitely known whether they were dead or alive. In fact, it seemed to Dannett, as he considered the case from all possible angles, that the chances were [illegible] of John K. and Mrs. Clemmins having been murdered directly after they were dragged from their carriage. Dannett, speculating on the probabilities, concluded that if Fernandez had ordered the interception of the vehicle and the capture of the girl, he would have been just as likely to have ordered the murder of her parents, for dead people tell no tales.

However slender they thought their chances to be, the detective and Pedro set about the work of finding the two Americans as if they were positive that they were still in the City of Mexico.

On the very day of the departure of Wilson and Constance from the capital, Pedro made the rounds of the secondary cafes in the company of his brother Arnuldo. Two things Pedro learned that cheered him. The first bit of news reached him in the second cafe he visited. He heard that Lopez Fernandez was dead, whether from the effects of his wounds or his own deliberate act gossip did not know, but gossip said that after the secretary had been brought back to consciousness, his wounds treated and bound up, the attending physicians had declared that there was no doubt of the man's ultimate recovery. Gossip declared that the secretary, left alone and realizing that he faced irretrievable ruin since the escape of the girl, had worked the bandages from his wounds and bled to death before his plight was discovered.

"God rest his soul, for he loved much!" exclaimed Pedro, under his breath and making the sign of the cross, for like most Mexicans, he was a devout Catholic.

The next bit of news came to Pedro a few hours later, and was much more germane to the task which confronted him and the detective. By acute questioning he learned that there was a story abroad in the city that two wealthy Americans, a man and a woman, were being held in the home of a Mexican gentleman, who had as his object ransom. According to the story, this Mexican gentleman (alleged) had succored the two Americans from a wild mob which sought to slay them a few weeks before when the feeling ran highest. This news cheered the heart of Pedro mightily, though he knew that it might not be founded on fact. The capital was full of rumors and many of them were not true. The guide hurried back to tell Dannett.

"Sounds good," said the latter, and added, "but one never can tell. There have been lots of Americans who have got in trouble down here recently, Pedro."

Whereafter Pedro had been slightly disheartened. But not for an instant did he give up the search. That night, Pedro, in the company of his brother, visited the Cafe Olivarre. It is the eating-place which is frequented late at night mostly by the retainers of rich residents of the city. As events turned out, Pedro could not have made a better choice. He and his brother seated themselves at one of the little tables, and ordered a bottle of wine between them. A few minutes later, a dark, handsome young fellow of the peon class came in and seated himself at the same table. The two brothers fell into conversation with him. A little later more wine was ordered; the three drank together. More wine, more talk. Pedro, with every one that he talked, brought the conversation back to the subject of the rumor of the two imprisoned Americans.

At first the young Mexican declared that he had heard nothing of the rumor; later he said that he had heard something; still later he declared that it was the talk of the town, and along toward midnight he grew confidential.

"Senor," he said, "I am the coachman in the home in which these two Americans are being held; they are treated well by Signor Armidio Lorenzie, but they are not allowed to leave their rooms. I have not seen them, and I do not know their names, but it is a man and his wife."

Pedro's blood pounded wildly through his body. "It must be they—it must be they!" he thought with delight. A plan took shape in the guide's mind. He must not allow this fellow to get away from him. He must make him very drunk, and take him home with him. Many drinks they had together, these three men, or many drinks seemingly. Each time Pedro, watching the other drain his glass, emptied theirs through a hole in the floor of the illy repaired restaurant. Toward morning the three left the cafe. The young coachman was very drunk, and he was guided away by the two brothers.

Pedro that day did not seek sleep. For several hours he was closeted with Marvin Dannett, and later he went out among the shops of the capital and came back with several bundles, which he gave to the detective. A short time after this, Dannett, disguised as a Mexican gentleman, left the house and repaired to the hotel kept by the English friend of Ebenezer Tootwhistle. He and the landlord consulted together for thirty minutes, and Dannett returned to the house at which he and Pedro had been stopping.

Pedro left the house and repaired to the home of Senor Armidio Lorenzie. He went to the back door and rang a bell. A servant came to the door.

Was the Senor Lorenzie at home?

The petite brunette declared that the master of the house was in. Pedro knew his ground, and he chucked the brunette under the chin and bestowed upon her a resounding kiss. The dark one blushed and slapped Pedro's cheeks. But her face was prettily flushed and her eyes said welcome.

Did Senor Lorenzie need a coachman—oh, the best coachman in all of Mexico?

The flushed one disappeared into the house. A moment later she returned.

It seemed that the senor was in need of a coachman; that drunken Miguel was again out on one of his "tornados;" the master had borne with him long, but this was the limit. No more would he drive the master.

Pedro was ushered into the presence of Senor Armidio Lorenzie. The senor was a suave, well-spoken Mexican-Spaniard of the upper class. It did not seem to Pedro that the Senor Lorenzie was one to

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hold prisoners for ransom, yet Pedro kept his tongue still, for he knew the value thereof. Pedro was engaged. Pedro passed down the hall on his way to the servants' quarters. The head of John K. Clemmins emerged from the doorway of one of the bedrooms. The American gazed astonished.

"Pedro!" he exclaimed.

"Master!" answered Pedro.

Clemmins drew his former servant into the room. Mrs. Clemmins started up astounded.

"My daughter, Pedro!" she cried. "Do you know where they have buried her?"

After which Pedro gave his former master and mistress information that sent them into the seventh heaven of delight.

Then Clemmins told Pedro that he and his wife were not held captive, as he believed, but that they were given haven in the Lorenzie home after they had been rescued from the mob. News had come to them that Constance had been murdered, and they had determined to remain in the capital until they learned where her body had been buried. Only a few of the servants of the household, explained the millionaire, had been told of their presence, so Pedro came to the conclusion that the other servants had observed, imagined, and talked, not always accurately, which is a custom of folks who have not enough to do.

Clemmins summoned the master of the house. There were hurried explanations and planning. Pedro hurried to Marvin Dannett. Then he hurried back to the home of Senor Armidio Lorenzie.

That night in front of the hotel owned by Ebenezer Tootwhistle's English friend, four muffled figures might have been observed climbing into a long, low, powerful automobile. Marvin Dannett was in the chauffeur's seat. Presently there was a low, whining hum, the big car spurted forward, and disappeared down the street, going at an almost incredible speed.

CHAPTER XXX.

CONSTANCE and Wilson gazed at each other in mutual astonishment.

There was no mistaking; they heard the sound of an automobile, running at a tremendous rate. At the intersection of the highway and the road running to the house before which they stood, the machine slowed; the driver gazed about, and then swerved his car in toward the house. He probably wished directions, or maybe he sought water. The latter was the real reason, for Pedro knew that road well.

The machine drew up close to the wagon. John K. Clemmins and his wife looked down at Constance. Mrs. Clemmins screamed and fainted. The millionaire tottered out of the car and gathered his daughter in his arms.

An hour later the auto's nose was turned toward Vera Cruz again. Six passengers were in it instead of four.

Old Zantillo turned the head of his newly acquired team toward the City of Mexico.

In the hallway of the house the two brothers strained at their bonds and cursed between set teeth. After a day and a half of struggle they would loose themselves; not before.

* * * * *

The moonlight filtered down upon the flat roofs of Vera Cruz. It rested with an especial softness along the veranda of the Hotel Alta Vista. Two persons, a man and a woman, came out upon the veranda and seated themselves in a corner thereof. The two had just said good night to Fenning and Beeare, with whom they had tramped about the city all day after Wilson had written and filed a story that was destined to make a certain Chicago managing editor swear delightedly and predict great things for a member of his staff.

"So you're off tomorrow?" said the young man.

It was hardly a question, yet there was a certain plaintiveness that robbed it of being a declaration. The reporter fell silent and watched the moonlight among the vines that rustled along the trellises.

"Won't he say it—oh, won't he say it?" thought the girl wildly. "Is he going to make me tell him that I want him to marry me?"

It seemed that that was just what he was going to do, but he was far from doing it with malice aforethought.

"Henry," breathed the girl, leaning over toward him. It was the first time that she had ever called him by his first name.

The man thought that it was the most beautiful word that he had ever heard on human lips.

"Henry," went on the voice, "I love you—I want to marry you."

The reporter got blindly to his feet.

"Oh!" he cried, and said no more, but held out his arms. She went into them.

The End.

* * *

BREAKING RECORDS.

I built an aeroplane of steel
And cloth and wood and other things.
I grasped the shining steering wheel
And fared me forth to try my wings.
I meant to break, as you may guess
A record and thus gain renown;
But, ah, alas, I must confess
I broke the record—coming down!

I thought to win a bit of fame
And records break as "king of wheat";
I thought I'd play the victor's game
And be the envy of the street.
But when, at last, my course was run
My rosy hopes went up in smoke;
I found—and did not think it fun—
I broke the record—going broke!

Oh, oft I've had my little dreams
Of fame or golden increment,
And in my bonnet, too, it seems,
I've had the bee of good intent;
But always when I caught the bee
No honey to my fingers clung.
The truth is plainly shown to me—
I broke the record—getting stung!

* * *

Satirical.

The stage drivers in Yellowstone Park are bothered considerably by the foolish questions asked by their passengers, and often resort to satirical answers. Once a lady tourist who seemed deeply interested in the hot springs inquired:

"Driver, do these springs freeze over in winter?"

"Oh, yes, yes; a lady was skating here last winter and broke through and got her foot scalded."

Southland Stories

In Borrowed Plumes

(Continued from page four.)

I found him the very first day out!"

"Yes?"

Bill Ordway was looking into the bearded face of his nephew's prisoner, and upon the features of each of the elderly men there was the light of recognition. Then Bill Ordway turned to his kinsman from the Big Blackfern and said:

"Son, it's dange'ous to p'rade a [illegible] in borried plumes. And it's dange'ous to believe that thar hain't but one blessed man in the world who wears a short, round, black beard. Son, you hain't got the bad man at all; you've got the United States marshal whose coat you found! Gi' me them thar handcuff keys——"

For a moment Lafe seemed not to believe it. But at last the truth dawned—and with great force. He jerked off the blue coat and flung it to the floor.

"The keys is in the coat," he said nervously, and disappeared in the night, going toward the Big Blackfern Mountain, in Tennessee.

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Undisciplined.

"How do you know that man is not married?"

"He continues to think he can treat all this talk about votes for women as a joke."

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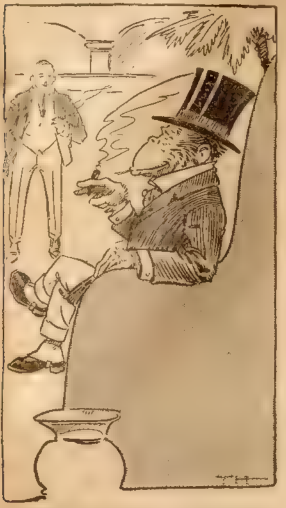
Side Show Sidelights

By Francis Metcalfe

THE TATTOOED LADY

THE Proprietor, smiling approvingly, consented to tell the history of Consul, the famous chimpanzee.

"Of course, I have to take the ship captain's word for what happened before I bought him, but from the way the chimp developed and the intelligence he displayed after he came into my possession, I am prepared to believe it. He told me that he got him from the natives at the mouth of a small river on the West Coast, where he anchored his steamer to trade. They came off about the ship in their canoes, but he did not care for the rubber and ivory they had to offer, and he was about to hoist anchor when one of them, who was in a small canoe with a woman, motioned to him to stop. The woman was crouched up in the stern, nursing what the captain thought was a baby, but when the man dragged it away from her, in spite of her voluble protest, he saw that it was a small chimpanzee. The man seemed desperately anxious to trade—and I imagine the Captain's trade goods were not the sort to meet the entire approval of the missionaries—so that a bargain was concluded and the woman's grief allayed by a generous share of the purchase price



He smoked like any other guest.

"Thousands of people saw him after I purchased him, and you can judge of the reputation he attained when I tell you that I was getting fifteen hundred dollars a week for him in Berlin when he died, and he was booked for the entire season at that price. People had seen him eat with a knife and fork, smoke a cigar, use a typewriter, and do all of the stunts which simply aped humanity, but you had to live with the little beast to appreciate how intensely human he was. Everybody connected with the show loved him, and when I wanted to find any of the employes who was off duty, or not in his proper place, I always went first to Consul's cage, and I was pretty sure to locate him. That monkey was never still, and the things he would do and the pranks he would play off his own bat were more amusing than any of the things he had been taught.

"When he was in company he was as well mannered as most men, but, of course, he had his prejudices and had to be watched. His special aversion was a negro, which is strange when you consider his early associations, and if one came around when he was loose he was apt to attack him. We had to consider that in traveling, for Consul always stopped at the hotels with his trainer, and sat about the lobbies, smoking his cigar like any other guest, but if there were negro servants about, we had to be very careful not to let them come near him.

"He had the reasoning power of a child ten years of age; he was patient when anything was wrong and we had to do disagreeable things to him, appreciating that it was for his benefit. Only once did we have to use force, when it was necessary to pull a tooth, and I am glad it wasn't oftener, for it took seven men to control him, and they thought they had done a day's work when we finished. The last time he went abroad he was the life of the ship, but he pretty nearly killed himself. The doctor prescribed a cough medicine for him, and Consul liked it so well he got up in the night, after his trainer had gone to sleep, opend the valise in which it was kept, and emptied the bottle. I guess there must have been laudanum in it, for they had to work over him the rest of the night to save him.

"He would walk the deck with the lady passengers, who made a great deal of him, and when the customary concert was given, nothing would do but that he must perform and then pass the plate for the collection. He was in evening dress and behaved like a perfect gentleman, and the collection was a large one It was heaped on the plate, and he was just about to present it to the captain when a native West Indian stepped forward to make a contribution. The money for the Seamen's Home went flying to the four corners of the salon and the trainer had a difficult time in persuading Consul to retire without tearing the clothes off of the man whose only offense was his color. This was Consul's last voyage, for he contracted pleurisy and died in Berlin, and I felt worse over his death than I did over the burning of my whole menagerie in Baltimore a few years ago."

"Have you found that early association with human beings makes the other animals easier to train?" asked the Stranger, and the Proprietor shook his head.

"No; I would rather train one taken in the jungle than an animal born in captivity. They do raise the pumas in South America and have them about the houses as we do cats, but I wouldn't trust one of 'em. And as for the bigger cats, the lions and tigers, there is no such thing as taming them. They may be trained to do certain things, but they are never trustworthy. We had a queer illustration of that when I was traveling with a caravan circus in France. One of the lionesses had a litter of three cubs, and in the excitement of the moving and strange surroundings, she killed two of them. We took the other one away, and the woman who cooked for us volunteered to raise it. She became very much attached to it, and developed the theory that she could overcome its savage instincts by diet, and for a time it looked as if she were right. The beast was with her for about two years and grew to a fine animal, but she never let him taste raw food. One day, when he was comfortably lying before the stove, she pushed him with her foot to get him out of the way, and he resented it. Whether it was that alone, or whether the odor of meat which she was about to cook appealed to him, I don't know; but all of his savage instincts were aroused, and when we secured him we found that he had taken most of her scalp off."

"It's funny how some people are always looking for a chance to get damages," said the Press Agent, settling himself comfortably in his chair. "We had a case of it when Merritt and I were running a dime museum out West. The freaks all lived together at a large boarding-house, and one morning, when they reported for duty, the 'Tattooed Lady' was missing It was before the days when they were so common, and we had spent a lot of money to have her decorated and made her our star attraction. Of course, none of the tattooing was visible when she was in street costume, but when she sat on the platform dressed in low neck and short skirts the lecturer had something to talk about, for the menagerie pictured on her was a thing of beauty, and the few choice texts like 'Be good and you will be happy,' which were scattered in between the animals, were highly moral and elevating, and that was one of the strong points of our show. Merritt used to spread himself when he was telling how she was shipwrecked on a desert island and held captive by the cruel cannibals, whose high priests spared her from the menu to tattoo her with the symbols of their heathenish worship It gave him a great chance to come in strong on the moral part, when he explained about the texts and told how they were added after the cannibals had been converted to red flannel shirts, silk hats, and a vegetable diet, by the missionaries, and I have seen innocent maiden ladies moved to tears by this recital So when he had to give his lecture without her he got mixed up and called attention to the marvelous growth of hair on the face of the 'Circassian Beauty' thinking she was the 'Bearded Lady,' and nearly pulled the ears off of the 'Dog Faced Boy' trying to explain that he was 'The Man With the Rubber Skin.'

"Of course, that made trouble among the freaks, who are a mighty touchy lot anyway, and I have noticed that trouble always comes in bunches in the show business, so I wasn't surprised when a husky guy that looked like a farmer came in with blood in his eye and asked for the manager. I looked around for Merritt, but he had gone around the corner to get something to drown his sorrow, so I slipped a piece of lead pipe under my coat and acknowledged the soft impeachment.

"'Look'ee here, wot kind of a skin game be youse fellers runnin' here?' says the guy, and I took a good grip on the lead pipe and tried to turn away wrath by a soft answer, and quoting from our advertisement that it was a highly moral as well as intellectual entertainment

"'Not by a dern sight, it ain't,' says he. 'It's a blasted man-trap to ketch the unwary, an' I'll have the law on ye an' make yer pay fer trifling with my young affections.' I have had some pretty tough things said to me in my day, but that was about the worst ever.

"'I deliver milk to that boardin'-house down the street an' I see a likely-lookin' gal there lately, an' I wanted some one to help milk an' look after the house, so I asks her to marry me. She says she will, so we hitched up, an' I never knew she was one o' yer dern freaks until it was too late. She says she's a "Tattooed Lady," an' she's all covered with picters.'

"'Well, what's the matter with 'em?' says I. 'Aren't they good pictures?'

"'Good enough,' says he, 'fer them as likes 'em; but I don't hanker after no decorations o' that kind an', b'gosh, I'll make yer pay fer palmin' off a damaged article on me. She's all over snakes an' other beasts an' it makes me sick to my stummick every time I thinks of 'em.' I tried to convince him that we were not responsible, and that it was his wife's duty to have informed him

"'That's what I told her, dod gast her! But she says it's my own fault if I didn't know she was a "Tattooed Lady," because I never asked her, and besides she isn't proud o' them pictures [illegible].'"

"How did you settle it and how about damages?" asked the Stranger.

"Damages!" exclaimed the press agent. "Why, Merritt came in just when he heard the guy kick, he lit right into him.

"'Blame your skin!' he yelled. 'I've a good mind to have you arrested for stealing the pictures from my art gallery. I have a claim on 'em, for I paid for the liquor to keep a sailor happy for six weeks while he was doing that job.' The guy got onto the fact that she was valuable, so they adjourned to a cafe to talk it over.'

"With what result?" asked the Proprietor, as he rose from the table

"Well, Merritt got her back on the platform, the farmer sold his farm, and within six weeks he was wearing more yellow diamonds and throwing a bigger chest than the husband of a grand opera prima donna."

In the Ledger of next week another of these funny tales [illegible] will appear, entitled 'The [illegible].' Don't miss any Ledgers containing these laughable yarns, reading them will do you good.

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The secret of success: Aim high and shoot often.

Those who pay as they go usually find the going good.

It's easier to borrow trouble than it is to give it away.

To have no money in pocket is to pocket an affront.

Trying to be content with what we have is some trial.

There are some good husbands but most of them are dead.

Did we ever hear of a married man who flattered his wife?

It's sometimes easier to [illegible] an obligation than a cook

The things we do not possess are what make life worth living.

Love is blind, but too often it recovers its sight after marriage.

The only sure thing about a sure cure for anything is that it isn't

After you have accomplished a really good thing, get busy again

An impossibility is something a woman is unable to do with a hairpin.

Knowledge isn't always power, but it knows when to press the button.

A woman's face is her history—though few can read between the lines.

Most girls are easily entertained; all [illegible] feed them taffy.

The homely girl can't afford to keep her domestic abilities under cover.

If the world owes every man a living, the millionaires must be preferred creditors.

Anybody who respects hoary age will not laugh at a patent medicine almanac joke.

The average man's brains are useful to another man who knows just how to use them.

Many a man is dissatisfied with his lot because it is located too near that of his neighbor.

The fable of the hare and the tortoise indicates that perseverance cops the gate receipts.

The average woman can get more exhilaration out of a cheap compliment than a man can out of a quart of champagne.

PEPPERS

Not Interested.

On a murder case in one of the Southern States an old mountaineer was called as witness. The defending lawyer was cross-examining him.

"You say you saw this murder committed?"

"Yas."

"How far were you from the spot where it took place?"

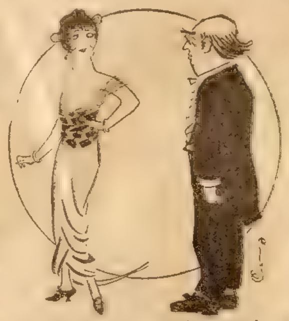
"'Bout a quarter-mile."

"What time was it when this deed was done?"

"'Bout half past eight."

"On the date this murder was supposed to be committed it would be almost totally dark, and you mean to say you could see distinctly what happened at that time at a quarter of a mile distant?"

The old mountaineer shuffled his feet, changed his quid, and stretched. "Well," he said, as he started to leave the witness chair, "I don't give a gol darn about this trial, anyway."



Miss Strongarm—"I think women have more courage than men.

Mr. Knosit—"I'm sure of it. I never yet saw a man past middle age who dared to examine himself in a mirror."

Why He Remained.

A certain Representative of Georgia says that when he was judge of his county court a fellow was before him charged with having stolen a pair of pantaloons—they call them "britches" in Georgia.

There were several witnesses, but the evidence was rather meager, and the accused was acquitted. He was told that he could go, but he remained in his seat. His lawyer, to whose successful defense he owed his liberty, hinted to him that he was free to depart, but he didn't budge."

"I don't want to go," said the fellow.

"And why?" asked the lawyer.

"Let the witnesses go first."

"Why?"

"Why, sir, I've got on the 'britches' I stole."

The Wrong Man.

Not long ago De Wolf Hopper, the actor, was selecting a hat in a well-known Fifth avenue shop in New York. His own hat removed, he stood holding two others, trying to decide which to buy. At this moment a young man of the overdressed, would-be swagger type entered the store, and mistaking Mr Hopper for a salesman, drawled at him in an affected and peculiarly irritating tone:

"My hat doesn't fit, my good man."

Before replying Mr. Hopper quite deliberately inspected the speaker from head to toe. Then, turning away, he said sweetly:

"Neither does your coat, my boy."

Generous.

At the funeral services of an elderly darky of Richmond, Va., the following colloquy was overheard between two aged negroes:

"There ain't no use in talkin'," said Mose Barker. "Dick Williams, he was the most charitablest man dis town ever seen."

"I reckon dat's so," said the darky to whom Mr. Barker imparted the information. And he paused as if waiting for evidence on this point.

"Yessuh," continued Mr. Barker, "Dick Williams, he always owned a plug hat, and durn' my time I ain't never heard that Dick ever refused to lend dat hat to anybody."—Judge.

The Question.

Miss Wells, the teacher, was delivering the final lecture of the term, and she dwelt with considerable emphasis on the fact that each student should devote all the intervening time preparing for the final examinations.

"The examination papers," she said, "are now in the hands of the printer. Are there any questions to be asked?"

Silence prevailed for a moment and then a voice timidly inquired:

"Who's the printer?"

Cabman's Timepiece.

The average person is so indolent that it is refreshing to read the following anecdote of a man who was noted for punctuality:

When Rossini the Italian composer, was director of the Theatre Italien in Paris he used to attend the rehearsals every morning. Precisely as the clock struck nine he came out of his house and hailed the nearest cab. Eventually a certain cabman noticed it, and was at the master's door each morning. As soon as Rossini entered the cab the driver would look at his watch and then drive off at a good pace. This proceeding was repeated every day. Rossini often wondered whether the driver looked at his watch to see how much time he had to get to the theater.

Finally one day he said, "My friend, why do you always look at your watch as soon as I enter your cab?"

Monsieur will pardon me," replied the cabman, laughing, "but I do it to see whether my watch is right."

The Same Chickens.

An old negro was recently brought before a justice in Mobile. It seemed that Uncle Mose had fallen foul of a bulldog while in the act of entering the henhouse of the dog's owner.

"Look here, Uncle Mose," the justice said informally, "didn't I give you ten days last month for this same thing? It was the same henhouse you were trying to get into. What have you got to say for yourself?"

Uncle Mose scratched his head.

"Mars Williams, yo' sent me ter de chain gang fer tryin' ter steal some chickens, didn't ye?"

"Yes, that was the charge."

"An' don't de law say yo' can't be charged twice wid de same 'fence?"

"That no man shall be twice placed in jeopardy for the identical act, yes."

"Den, sah, yo' des hab ter let me go, sah. Ah was after de same chickens, sah."

Nothing Like Precision.

President Wilson, at a dinner in Washington, said of a statistician:

"His figures are so precise that one inclines to doubt them. He is like the American sugar planter in Hawaii who, taking a friend to the edge of a volcano, said:

"'That crater, George, is just 70,004 years old.'

"'But why the four?' George asked.

"'Oh, I've been here four,' was the reply. 'It was 70,000 when I came.'"

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Warship Adventures

Or, FRANK ALLEN AT SEA

By Julian Fabre

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CHAPTER X.

SOON after her return from the practice grounds, the Albany was detached from the Atlantic Squadron and sent to the Mediterranean to protect the interests of the United States in the coast cities of Turkey, which was then in a state of ferment. Frank and Walt were in a state of high elation, as were the rest of the crew.

Besides Frank's chums of the berth deck there were several others who interested him. Mr. Briggs, the carpenter's mate, was quite a character. He was a little, sandy-haired man with a conspicuous white lock upon his forehead, at which he would tug when deep in a discussion, and he was a Spiritualist. Finding a congenial soul in Frank, he would expound his theories to him whenever the opportunity arose.

"When I look around this ship," he would say, "and see the boys, as brave as lions, and the guns, all ready for action, to carry the glorious Stars and Stripes to victory, I can't help thinking, 'If the Government only knew!'"

"Knew what?" asked Frank.

"Knew what it is that carries the glorious Stars and Stripes to victory," replied the carpenter's mate, tugging at his lock. "The living crew's all right, but it's the dead crew behind 'em, the hosts of spirits that used to be navy men, that send the shell straight to the target."

"Why don't you write to the Government?" Mr. Bunn, the commissary steward, would ask, winking at his audience. This always angered Mr. Briggs, who believed that his theories, which were well known among the officers, prevented his appointment to the rank of chief carpenter's mate. But he would soon forget his chagrin, and presently he would be riding his hobby again.

The Albany touched at the Azores and then steamed for Gibraltar, where she lay for a day or two. It was while they were here that a circumstance occurred which cemented Frank's friendship with Mr. Briggs.

The carpenter's mate, who was of an antiquarian turn of mind, had persuaded Frank to ascend the Rock with him. Having secured permits to visit that part of the citadel which was not secret, the two proceeded along the rock-hewn paths toward the summit. Frank wondered at the natural strength of the fortress, said to be honeycombed with secret works, and at the great sea-wall, with its bastions, curtains, and fortresses, so that he hardly heard Mr. Briggs' animated historical narrative. Late in the afternoon they were standing together in a wild place beyond the farthest end of the roadway, near the summit, while a thick fog that had gathered round them blotted out the view below.

"Aye," resumed Mr. Briggs, enthusiastically, "it isn't the Rock, nor yet the guns, that keeps the English flag flying." Tug, tug. "It's the spirits of the dead, Frank, that guard the Rock and uphold the strong right arms of the living."

"Have you ever seen a spirit?" inquired Frank, feeling a little uncomfortable at the nature of the scene, the fog, and the sense of solitude.

"Not yet," admitted Mr. Briggs, "but I'm developing. I've felt their presence."

At that moment Frank felt a distinct tug at his trousers, and, spinning round, was horrified to perceive a diabolical-looking, small brown face grin at him from near the ground. Then it vanished in the fog, leaving Frank overwhelmed with terror.

"Aye, I've felt them, Frank," continued Mr. Briggs. "I know they guide me—wow!"

A lean, brown hand came through the fog and nipped the carpenter's mate in a part of his anatomy which was conveniently near. This time they both saw the face glaring with evil malice at them. Mr. Briggs gave one yell and began racing down the cliff at the top of his speed, till he tumbled in a heap upon the ground.

As for Frank, he soon realized that the "spirit" was nothing more than one of those mischievous wild apes that roam about the upper portion of the Rock.

"Don't speak to anybody about this," cautioned Mr. Briggs, when he had recovered his self-possession. "It may be that you are a medium. That is why I felt drawn toward you. We must develop. At present we attract only evil spirits, but if we are patient, good ones will come in time."

Frank promised.

The Albany put in at Malta, where, owing to news of typhoid in the Levant, the whole ship's crew were vaccinated. The use of the anti-typhoid serum had only lately been established in the navy, and the ship's surgeon was anxious to see how it would act as a safeguard against the disease. Then, on receipt of an urgent communication from Beirut, the warship sailed to that port, arriving two days later.

The situation was fully as bad as had been reported. A massacre of Christians had occurred, and further disturbances were expected at any moment, as the mob was fired with hatred of foreigners. A company of bluejackets was at once sent ashore, with some handy three-pounders, and soon the American consulate and the American Mission School were under guard. The men camped in front of these buildings, and Captain Merritt sent a polite message to the Governor, Nikhals Pasha, assuring him that on the first sign of a disturbance, he would lay his residence in ashes. To emphasize this promise, he trained his guns on that building.

Nikhals Pasha was said to be a young man and to have assumed his office recently, owing to the favor of the Sultan. Contrary to all etiquette, he not only abstained from paying a visit to Captain Merritt, but, when that officer proposed to visit him, sent back word that he was too ill to see him.

Battleships from three European powers were in Beirut, and detachments had been landed from these in defense of their respective consulates. Typhoid was raging in the town, and funeral parties proceeded almost daily to the cemetery, yet, owing to their vaccination, not a man of the American detachment was taken ill, while the ranks of the foreign bluejackets were decimated by the disease.

Beirut was adequately supplied with water from the hills, which bubbled up in all the mosques and squares. This was believed to be contaminated with typhoid germs, and to make protection doubly assured, the Americans were supplied with distilled water from the Albany.

Miss Rogers, an energetic, white-haired lady from Scranton, had two hundred Syrian and Armenian girls under her charge, and in spite of the panic, her influence was so contagious that the school was conducted as usual, and not a pupil left. But many a dart was left in the hearts of the susceptible bluejackets by the dark-haired, demure young ladies, as they blushingly proceeded with their studies under the protection of Uncle Sam's sailors.

The men had ample opportunity to see the town. In detachments of twos and threes they would promenade the streets and the bazaars, under the scowls of the Turks and the invitations of the rug sellers and silversmiths. Frank never wearied of the scene. This civilization was so different from that of his own country, yet he knew that human nature was the same here as everywhere else and that the difference was in education and surroundings only.

That was one form of education that the navy gave a man. It broadened him. Frank could never after his return to civil life hear any race spoken of disparagingly without something approaching disgust.

When the detachment had been five or six days in possession of the American school and consulate, the rumor began to spread that a crisis was imminent. Fanatical priests were haranguing the people in the mosques, urging them to make an end of the Giaours. The situation looked so threatening that Captain Merritt sent another message to Nikhals Pasha, urging him to declare martial law. On the same day Frank was sent, with a detachment of some dozen men, under the command of an ensign, to bring in a naturalized American family, of Syrian origin, living in a suburban part of Beirut, whose lives had been menaced by their Turkish neighbors.

The men started off at eight in the morning. They had not gone beyond the protection of the three-pounders, however, when it became clear that the mob was bent upon mischief. In place of the smiling solicitations of the bazaar merchants, they now encountered absolute silence, except on the part of the gathering crowd behind them, which began uttering taunts and making expressive gestures. There was no further demonstration, however, until the Syrians had been taken under the protection of the bluejackets and the return journey began. Then the crowd commenced jostling the men in the narrow streets and trying to cut off each from his neighbor. At the sudden turn among the maze of narrow streets that lies at the back of the palace, Frank found himself wedged in among a wall of fanatics.

In front of him he could see his comrades maintaining their way with businesslike bayonet jabs, which kept the mob at a distance, but the ensign hesitated to give the order to fire, and soon each man was fighting his way alone and isolated from the rest. Frank could advance only a few steps at a time, and at last he set his back against a wall and went through the motion of taking aim.

Suddenly, with a yell, a man rushed at him from behind. Frank, turning hastily, caught a glimpse of a green turban and heard the hiss of steel. He ducked instinctively, and a curved scimitar passed with an inch of his shoulder and clanged upon the stones. Before the fanatic could recover his balance, Frank clubbed him with his rifle, knocking him senseless. Then missiles fell on him from all sides, savage figures surrounded him, striking at him with loud cries of rage. There was no chance to fire into that pressing mob, and Frank thrust and clubbed alternately, while the crowd grew still wilder in its attack. A priest, in a long, mud-colored robe, screamed anathemas at him. Stones struck him. A forest of hands was stretched out toward him, tearing at him and trying to seize his rifle. From a roof-to[illegible] slate tile was thrown, striking [illegible] the head and dazing him. He felt the supreme necessity of retaining consciousness, and casting one last glance around him for aid, he suddenly perceived that a door in a nearby house stood very slightly ajar. Instantly he had sprung for it, darted inside, and slammed it, bolting it in the face of his pursuers.

He now found himself in a paved courtyard, evidently an annex to the straggling palace enclosure. He ran hastily around it. On every side heavily barred windows frowned down on the sun-scorched tiles, but there was no exit save by the door through which he had come, and this was cracking under the blows of the mob, whose yells came to his ears faintly through the massive oak. Reeling and bleeding, and almost fainting under his injuries, Frank was just about to take his station behind the door and sell his life as dearly as he could when, without any noise, a window above him opened slightly, and a white hand beckoned to him.

There was just half a minute before the door would yield. As the window half opened, Frank noticed that the bars were not attached to the wall but to the window frame, and moved with it. There was an opening just large enough to squeeze through. He leaped for the windowsill, clung there an instant, and with a last exercise of all his strength, raised himself to the window's level, pulled himself up, plunged through, and fell fainting upon the floor within just as the baffled mob burst into the courtyard below.

CHAPTER XI.

THE taste of a delicious cooling drink, the sound of gentle voices murmuring in an unknown tongue, and Frank Allen came back to consciousness to find a dozen young and beautiful ladies bending over him, fanning him, arranging bandages about his head; and all regarding him with the greatest possible concern. But as he opened his eyes there was an alarmed chattering, a scurrying, and every one disappeared in agitation.

Frank looked around him. He was ly-

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ing on a divan in a large chamber, luxuriously furnished in the Turkish style, although an admixture of modern French furniture and, among costly pictures, the presence of crudely tinted reproductions and colored calendars indicated a certain diversity in the tastes of the occupants. The floor was covered with Oriental rugs, the barred windows heavily draped, and through an open door Frank could see what appeared to be a succession of rooms, each apparently giving upon the courtyard below.

He must have been unconscious several hours, for the sun had set and darkness was deepening.

A minute later the ladies filed in decorously at the door. Each was now wearing the vashmouk, or Turkish veil, which, though it concealed the face below the eyes, rather brought out than hid the beauty beneath it. Frank surmised that these were the hanoums comprising the harem of some wealthy Turk.

One of them, the spokeswoman, approached Frank, and, with an air of great seriousness, seated herself in a low chair beside the divan on which he lay, and began to speak.

"I Fatima," she said, with a charming lisp, pointing to herself. "I speak English. My teacher an Englishwoman. You are American sailor?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Frank, rather confused by this bevy of highly interested women, whose eyes were all turned intently upon him.

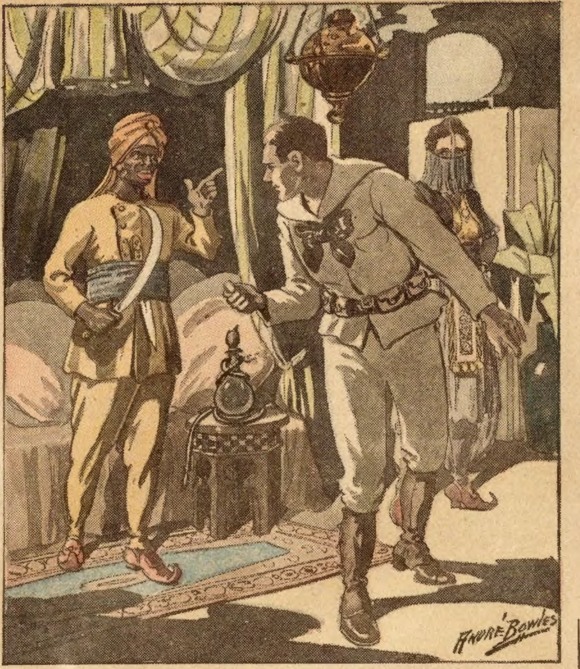
"I save you from Turk man," continued Fatima, hesitating at every word. "Turk man he very good people, only wild. When priest tell Turk man to kill, he kill."

"I don't blame them, ma'am," Frank answered.

"Now you safe from Turk man," Fatima continued. "But much danger. You now in palace of Nikhals Pasha. He very bad man."

"Then I suppose you are Mrs. Nikhals," suggested Frank, and Fatima nodded and smiled.

"I Mrs. Nikhals," she said. "We all Mrs. Nikhals." She spoke a few words of Turkish and the others smiled and acquiesced. "If he find you here he kill you, kill I, kill everybody."



He wore a large scimitar.

"Yes, Mrs. Nikhals," said Frank.

"Nikhals Pasha very, very bad man," continued Fatima. "No read Koran. No go to mosque. No say prayers. Drink wine. We all afraid som[illegible]meet him."

"Do you mean to sa[illegible] that you have never met your husband?" inquired Frank in astonishment.

"None of us meet Nikhals Pasha except me and Khadija. Khadija there his wife. Nikhals Pasha regular bad man. He only want one wife."

"Whew!" exclaimed Frank, passing his hand over his aching forehead."

"Khadija, she watch from window, see Turk man kill you. She not want you to be killed because you beautiful. She run down, open door, you run in, I save you. Now safe, but if Nikhals Pasha find you here, you die, all die."

"Then I'd best be getting away, ma'am," said Frank, rising.

"No can go," rejoined Fatima. "Easy come, hard go. People see you come here, tell Nikhals Pasha. I don't know what to do."

Frank was thinking of solving the problem by making a flying leap from the window, when Khadija, who had been doing a sort of sentry duty in the corridor, spoke a few animated words, and instantly all disappeared with a wild scurrying. A moment later footsteps sounded along the passage, and a gigantic negro, with wild, staring eyes and an unhealthy expression, came up to Frank and beckoned him to rise and follow him.

As he wore a large scimitar and looked ready to put it in action, Frank, who had dropped his rifle in the courtyard, decided that it would be best to comply promptly. He followed the eunuch along the corridor, then down three flights of uncarpeted stairs, along a stone passage, and into a cell which his leader opened. The enunch clanged the door on Frank and left him there, returning presently with a pitcher of water, which he set down beside him, again withdrawing.

The cell was completely dark. Frank, feeling his way around it, discovered that it was of small size and absolutely bare, except for a heap of straw in the furthest corner. Being utterly exhausted, he flung himself down, and must have fallen into a profound slumber, for when the eunuch awakened him a ray of sunlight straggled through a tiny barred window overhead.

After threading a number of passages and ascending more stairs, Frank passed through a series of gaudily furnished rooms and into a large chamber, around which were ranged a score or more of military officers and priests. On a sort of dais at the far end sat a stout, black-haired, black-bearded man, about thirty years of age, whom Frank correctly surmised to be Nikhals Pasha himself. Beside him stood a priest, and, as Frank was brought in, the man began pointing to him and gesticulating angrily, while he uttered a torrent of declamation. From the green turban that he wore and the respect accorded him it was evident that he had made the pilgrimage to Mecca, and was accordingly held in especial reverence. He was, as a matter of fact, the chief priest of Beirut and Frank surmised that he was demanding that he be put to death.

After he sat down, a man covered with decorations, who ought to have been a general, but was, actually, the interpreter, addressed Frank in fairly good English.

"You are charged with breaking into the harem of his excellency the Governor," he said. "The offense is punishable by death according to the law of Islam. What do you want to say?"

"Tell him I'm under the law of the United States, and that the law of Islam don't go with me," said Frank.

"You are mad," replied the interpreter. "If I should tell his excellency that he would have you skinned alive. He is a dreadful gentleman when he gets angry. I shall tell him you humbly crave for mercy, and that it was a mistake, and you were flying in terror because you were afraid of the populace. Don't be a fool, young man. Go down on your knees and knock your head three times on the floor."

In spite of his apparent peril, Frank had a feeling that these proceedings were comic opera, that Nikhals Pasha was executing a bluff for the benefit of his prestige, and would never dare put him to death. Ke knew that, wherever he might be, the protecting arm of his Government was stretched out over him. He looked round confidently at the figures in their grotesque attires, and at the Governor, whose face had begun to seem strangely familiar to him, though he could not recall that he had ever met him before. It seemed at least, unlikely.

"Tell Mr. Nikhals that I'm Frank Allen, Gunner's Mate, Third Class, of the U. S. Cruiser Albany, born in Milbury, Pennsylvania, and that I don't give a darn for the laws of Islam!" he shouted. And then, to clinch matters, he added a sentence which he had often heard in the bazaars. He had no knowledge what the words meant, but he had always observed that they produced an inspiriting effect.

The effect was instantaneous. The interpreter started back and flung up his hands in horror, the eunuch gripped his scimitar, the priest, dropping upon his knees, began yelling and tearing his robes; and as for Nikhals Pasha, he leaped from the dais, and running up to Frank, shook both fists in his face, dancing and screaming with fury.

Frank was just about to give him a cross-counter, when, to his utter amazement, he saw the Pasha's right eyelid droop in a perceptible wink.

He looked hard. Could he have been mistaken? No, there was no doubt of it. The Pasha winked again, even although the stream of curses never stopped flowing.

The Pasha uttered a sharp command, and immediately the eunuch thrust Frank through a door into a little room behind the dais. The priests and officers filed slowly out. The Pasha continued to shout maledictions until they were gone; then he dismissed the eunuch, entered the room in which Frank stood, and shut the door.

"Sit down," said Nikhals Pasha, in tones distinctively American. "Have a cigar."

He handed him a box, and when Frank had got his smoke alight, the Pasha put his hand to his head and took off his hair. Under the jet-black wig was a crop as sandy as ever came originally out of Scotland. Then, with another movement, he unhooked his beard and laid it on the table. The Pasha now revealed himself, as a smooth-shaven young fellow not more than ten years Frank's senior.

"Darn it, I never could grow a beard, anyway!" said Nikhals Pasha, regretfully. "When I heard you say you were from Milbury, I couldn't hold myself in any longer. Don't you know me?"

"I guess I do!" yelled Frank, grasping the Pasha by the hand. "You're Tom Nichols, who ran away eight years ago after slugging old Simpson for cheating you out of a week's wages and nearly killing him."

CHAPTER XII.

"NEARLY killing!" yelled Nikhals Pasha, starting out of his chair. "You don't mean to tell me he isn't dead, Allen?"

"Oh, he's dead all right," answered Frank, shifting his cigar, "but you didn't kill him. He was walking around a week after you left town. He died two years afterward of apoplexy."

"He always was a hard-headed old cuss," muttered the Pasha. "I thought I'd broken his skull for sure, the old skinflint! And you mean to say I can go home and not be prosecuted?"

"Sure," answered Frank. "There never was any talk of prosecuting."

"Whoop!" ejaculated the Pasha, turning down a chair and pirouetting round the room with it. Presently he sat down again.

"Do you know that I'm the most bloodthirsty, benighted Oriental Governor anywhere from Bassorah to Bagdad?" he asked. "Do you know that my fanatical hands are reeking with the blood of hecatombs of victims? Do you know I am the Modern Moloch, the Turkish Tumor, and the Brute of Beirut? And I couldn't hurt a fly."

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"How did you manage to get your reputation then?" asked Frank.

"Press agent in Constantinople," grinned the Pasha. "Talk about New York, we've got your newspaper men skinned. And it all keeps me solid with the Sultan, and makes me the most popular and best feared Governor that Beirut ever had."

He puffed reflectively at his cigar.

"Then, again," he continued, "they think I am a devout Mohammedan. I go to the mosque every Friday, and as for intoxicants—well, they think it would mean death to say the word 'brandy' to me."

"I guess some of your ladies are wise to that," said Frank.

"What do you mean, Allen? Have they got on to me?"

"Ah, well, you mustn't blame them. Ladies will be ladies, you know."

"I bet that Fatima has been snooping round," muttered the Pasha, disgustedly. "The fact is, my boy, she's a little jealous of my Khadija—I call her Katie, for short. She's set the whole crowd of them against me, and I daren't get rid of her because the Sultan would haul me over the coals. That's been my trouble—I couldn't make a good polygamist. You see, they're all high-born dames from Constantinople, except Katie, and every now and then, after I've been supposed to have pulled off a massacre, the Sultan sends me a new one. I'm supposed to be a regular Mormon, which pleases the old-fashioned conservative people in the country districts. But except for Katie and Fatima, I've never set eyes on any of them. I wish I was back in God's country, with Katie.

"You see, it's this way, Allen," he continued. "After I had slugged old Simpson, I cleared for New York, intending to join the navy. But I found they wouldn't take me without references, and as I supposed the police were on my trail, I shipped aboard a tramp steamship. We rounded the Horn and pulled up at Manila. There I got another berth and worked my way by fits and starts up the Persian Gulf, landing at last at Bagdad, dead broke, except for a mangy camel that I had got for curing an Arab sheikh of flatfoot by reciting the Constitution to him. Well, by this time I'd picked up something of the language, and I got a job with a rich Bey, got on the right side of him, and married his daughter—that's Katie. He died soon after and left me all his property, so I went to Constantinople to set up as a gentleman. You remember that fellow who tried to assassinate the Sultan outside the mosque last year? It was I who stopped that. I was on the spot, by good luck, and the Sultan was so pleased with me that he took me into his service, and, being supposed to be a devout Mohammedan, I got the job here. And I wish I were out of it," he continued moodily.

"Of course, I didn't dare to set foot aboard a U. S. warship, thinking I was wanted back in the old country, but now things are a bit easier, if what you say is true. By the way, you are supposed to be dead, and Captain Merritt's been making no end of trouble, and he's coming here for an audience at noon, and swears he'll have a public hanging to avenge you. So, as I dare not release you except under appearance of force, you'll have to go back to prison for a few hours, and——"

A loud knock at the door caused the Pasha hastily to assume his hair and whiskers.

"Get down and cringe," he whispered, "or you'll spoil the game. Say, can't you crook your knees? That's better. Now hit your head on the carpet. Fine, Frank! Keep it up."

The giant enunch and two officers entered and began speaking in tones of great excitement. At a sign from the Pasha the eunuch seized Frank by the arm and led him back to his cell. As he was hurried through the audienceroom, he caught a momentary glimpse of Captain Merritt and a guard of bluejackets, advancing at the far end of the corridor.

The ray of sunlight that entered through the little window in the cell had long since disappeared when the door opened with a clang and a figure appeared, bearing a lantern. Frank started to his feet, to see Fatima before him.

She was dressed in a long cloak and veil, which shrouded her from head to foot. She set the lantern down cautiously and approached him.

"Come 'long," she whispered. "We go now."

"Where to?" asked Frank.

"We go away, you and I. Nikhals Pasha, he boil you in oil tonight. He tell Mohammed, Mohammed tell I. Mohammed tell I everything."

"Oh, that's all right, Mrs. Fatima," answered Frank, easily. "That's all a bluff, you know."

"Nikhals Pasha very bad man," answered the lady. "Him devil man. Boil alive. Skin alive on hooks. Roast Armenian in oven. Only want one wife. Him devil."

Frank became decidedly uneasy as Fatima related these culminating atrocities. Might it be true, or might not the Pasha have decided to sacrifice him to the clamor of his followers?

He did not feel like taking any chances, and so, at Fatima's urging, he followed her along the corridor until they reached a little stone door set in a wall of masonry. Stooping down, Fatima pulled a man's traveling cloak from a niche and put it over Frank, effectively concealing his sailor's attire. She drew the hood above his head, and then, turning a key, led him out into the heart of the city.

Evidently there were many different ways of approach to the Governor's Palace.

They trod the narrow streets fearfully, but none of those who cast their eyes casually upon them suspected that the veiled lady was the wife of the redoubtable Pasha. It was almost dark when they stood together on the water-front. They had traversed the greater portion of the city, avoiding those districts which were occupied by the foreign detachments. To do this it was necessary to make a detour almost completely round the wall.

Now Frank could discern the lights of the Albany; and then, while he wondered what were Fatima's intentions, he heard the tramp, tramp of a party of sailors, marching down to the wharf. Instinctively he gave them the hail.

An officer halted them. Frank found himself looking into the face of Captain Merritt.

"Come on duty, sir," he said, saluting him, and throwing back his cloak, revealing his uniform.

The ranks of the bluejackets rocked with laughter, but the Captain's face grew white with anger.

"What does this masquerade mean?" he demanded.

"I've just escaped from the Pasha's palace, sir," answered Frank. "This lady, who has assisted me, is the Pasha's principal wife."

"Ha!" exclaimed the Captain, sarcastically. "A very pretty situation, I see. Does this lady seek American protection?" he continued, half turning to Fatima.

"I love him," answered the Pasha's chief wife, indicating Frank. "I go on ship with him."

"Unfortunately that program is hardly feasible, because the Navy Regulations do not permit ladies aboard battleships," answered Captain Merritt, suavely.

"You'd best go home, Mrs. Nikhals," Frank interposed. "I know the Pasha doesn't mean to harm you."

"You no love I?" inquired Fatima, in tones of deep injury.

"I'm not allowed to, ma'am, so long as you are married to the Pasha," Frank answered.

"Ha! I understand. I go home, get divorce, then kill Khadija, come to you tomorrow," said Fatima, nodding her head in perfect comprehension. And she disappeared in the darkness.

"A lively prospect for you, my lad," said Captain Merritt, as the bluejackets resumed their march to the wharf. "I am glad to see you back again, however. You may be interested to know that you have put Mr. Briggs to the trouble of erecting a gallows in the square to accommodate your supposed murderers tomorrow morning. You will proceed aboard the Albany, and report to me at eight bells tomorrow."

This highly interesting story will be continued in next week's Ledger. Do not miss reading it. A lot of great and timely stories will appear in the Ledger during the coming months. Send in your subscription and you will find yourself repaid ten times over.

* * *

Five Languages.

There had been a fatal accident at the railroad crossing in a little Pennsylvania town, and the coroner, a pompous old fellow who magnified conscientiously both his office and its incumbent, had impaneled a jury for the inquest.

There was only one witness of the accident, an illiterate Slav from the coal mines, who could understand no English. With him the coroner began to struggle.

"Can you speak German?" he asked. The man shook his head.

"Can you speak Italian?" continued the official. Again the man shook his head.

"Can you speak Hungarian?" The same response.

"Can you speak Russian?" finally asked the coroner. Again the man shook his head.

"It's no use, gentlemen," said the coroner, turning to the jury. "We can't proceed with the case. I've spoken to this man in five different languages and can't make him understand me."

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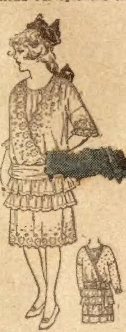
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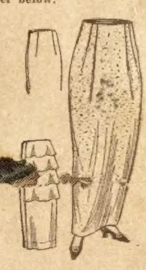
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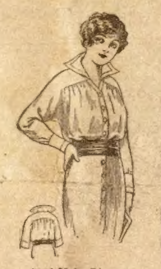
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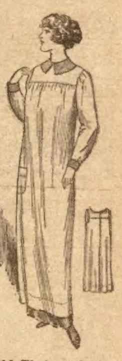
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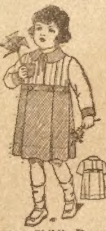
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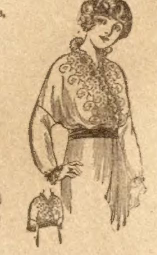
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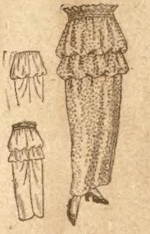
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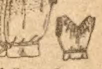
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We Beat Them All

$60 a Week Easy

How would you like to get such big money and more every week? Wouldn't it be great? Wouldn't you live swell—couldn't you have everything you ever wanted? Just think of it! $60 a week as easy as rolling off a log! You absolutely can't find a position like this anywhere else if you hunt forever. No, not even if you had a pull with everybody. It's a bigger cinch than any politician's. It's the biggest, grandest, most stupendous and absolutely sure money-making position ever offered. We say $60 a week because $60 is positively the least you should make in this position. But if you're as much of a live wire as most of our agents, you ought to double that amount easy. We don't care who you are—we don't care where you live or what you work at now, we prove with the most astounding and convincing evidence that we offer you the biggest-paying position open today.

No Money or Experience

You don't need a single dollar of capital—you don't need anything that we don't supply **free.** This is the house that treats its agents right—the house that supplies you with outfits that do the talking and selling for you—the house that gives you the most novel and remarkable lightning-selling helps ever gotten out. This is the house that supplies you with elegant sales-making presents to give your customers. We do all that and more—we do everything. There isn't a thing known within reason we won't do to make it easy for our agents to make big money. We show you how to sell nine out of every ten you call on. All you have to do is wear the nifty suit we give you free and show our magnificent samples and smashed prices and the sale is closed—your big profit is made. You don't have to be "smooth-tongued." You don't have to be educated. You don't need a big bunch of friends to sell Great Central made-to-measure garments. They sell themselves! You can do it—you can make $60 a week—as easy as our thousands of other agents. We don't care what you are doing now, you needn't give up your job right away. You can make big money on the side, in your spare time. Then when you see how easy it is to make big money, you can devote **all** your time to taking orders for Great Central Clothes and make more money than you ever thought possible.

We Run An Account For You

We collect your profits for you and send you the money. We wiped competition off the map. When any other agent tries to butt in, our agent simply shows our swell samples, nifty styles, low prices, to get the order quick. The live wire agents are rapidly realizing the advantage of tying up with us—they're throwing away their cheap outfits and coming over with us day by day—over where the big money is easy and the sailing smooth—over with the house that's **"First in Everything."** We want you no matter what **you do now.** We'll give you exclusive territory—show you how to be prosperous, independent and the swellest dressed fellow in your town. We will send you our wholesale tailoring outfit, which cost us $76,000.

$76,000 Outfit FREE!

In all your life, wherever you've been, whatever you've seen, whatever you've thought of, you've never beheld such a dazzling, stupendous, magnificent sample display as our famous **"Book of Gold"**—the Masterpiece de Luxe Edition, which we give you free. Think of it! 96 of the niftiest, up-to-the-second styles—the latest things out—the styles every man wants but can't get outside of Chicago and New York except from our agents—styles that are the rage in the metropolis—styles no local tailor can for the life of him duplicate—and 225 of the most gorgeous, elegant, richest patterns you ever laid eyes on—every single one absolutely different and distinctive. We give you this glittering, mammoth **"Book of Gold"** absolutely **free.** We don't charge a cent—you don't make a deposit. It's the grandest and mightiest salesman ever gotten out! It gets the orders where "conversation" would fall down. Our agents are wild about it—[illegible] astonished, delighted. **Fink of Arkansas** wrote: "I was absolutely dumfounde[illegible] **Martin of South Dakota** wrote: "There isn't any trouble selling fo[illegible] Great Central." **Lawton of Mississippi** wrote: "It c[illegible]y [illegible] corker." No other agent or dealer can get a look-in when you show our sample book of made-to-order suits or overcoats. **When you show up, other agents shut up!** You get the orders—you get the big profits—$60 a week and more.

Grand Suit FREE!

Made to your own measure from any style and fabric you select, without a cent cost to you. We even pay the express charges. That means just what it says—there's no bluff about it. We simply don't stop at any expense to make our agents successful. Every time we turn around we think of something new to help make big money for them. That's our method—that's why our agents are prosperous—that's why they stick with us—that's why we are positively the largest, strongest and best wholesale tailoring concern of our kind in America. We give you this swell suit or overcoat free because we want you to be the real thing—the fashion model—the style setter in your town and wherever you go. The minute you put it on everybody will notice your classy appearance—your friends and even strangers will ask you where you got it. They will want one like it and you take their order. It's the easiest thing you ever saw. This is no bunk—we're telling you the absolute truth—the experience of all our agents. They tell us how easy they find it and we tell you.

Surest Guarantee Known!

You ought to see our Customer's Assurance Certificate of Guarantee. You've heard about and read about other guarantees, but what do they really guarantee? What good are they? You don't want "conversational" guarantees—your customers don't want common "talk." Not on your life! You want something **legal,** binding, iron-clad, and here's where you get it. Just remember our Customer's Assurance Certificate of Guarantee stands back of every Great Central garment to guarantee we positively refund purchase price if after examination any garment fails to give absolute satisfaction. It guarantees every single garment shipped by us is **tailor-made** especially to order from measurements sent us in each individual case. Remember that we absolutely do not make ready-made garments. We make Great Central garments so far superior to all that every customer is delighted and orders again—nobody ever has a single kick coming. Great Central styles are the work of versatile minds of the cleverest designers high salaries can employ. Our original, classy ideas cost us fortunes every season. The quality of every garment—the unexcelled workmanship and the remarkably perfect fit is the result of brains, ability and care. Any man who wants real swell clothes—wants perfect fit—wants every feature the best—must wear Great Central Clothes. Even competitors will own up to this if you can corner them.

You Can!

Makes no difference what you work at—salesman, clerk, book-keeper, office man, teamster, brick-layer, hod-carrier, driver, tradesman, waiter, farmer, sailor, motorman, or anything else—you can earn big money taking orders for Great Central made-to-measure clothes and we will prove it to you mighty quick if you send the coupon now. **Gannon of Ohio** wrote: "I am pleased to be working for a company so straight in their dealings and do as they advertise they will do." We have hundreds of letters just like this. Don't work any more for a one-horse concern—come with us—connect with

The Big Wholesale Tailors

SMASH Go Prices!

The tariff on woolens has been reduced—and, as always, we are "First in Everything." We pulled off a big trick this season that bewildered, dumbfounded and shamed other manufacturers. We got in ahead of them all with our stupendous orders for the classiest, most exclusive fabrics manufactured by foreign and domestic mills. Again we can undersell everybody $3 to $5 on Suits, Pants or Overcoats. Again we enable our agents to give competitors the laugh and walk away with the orders and profits. Talk about smashing prices! Everybody wonders how we do it!

"How Can You Do It?"

Every day our army of agents write us—"How can you give away such dandy presents?" "The present you sent made a big hit." "The grand presents you give are making steady customers for me." That's how delighted our agents are. There will be many a big surprise for you if you step lively and tie up with this tremendous wholesale house—surprises that will make great big money for you—surprises that no other house would dare attempt. The expense would scare them as white as a sheet. Don't pike along—get the real coin with us.

Mail Coupon Quick

If you want to be a big man, come with the **big house** in the wholesale tailoring business. Join the successful, prosperous, live-wire agents. Tie up with the house that makes a big income easy. Don't stick around with pikers! Don't hang around a hopeless job, making big money for somebody else and very little for yourself. You'll have to connect with us sooner or later, so you better do it now and get in soft early. Come on with us—come on with the money-makers—come on with the house that treats you square—that enables you to make $60 and more a week. Send the coupon now—this very minute—for remarkable proof and gorgeous outfit **FREE!**

Be Sure to Ge
this Wonderfu
Big Free Book!

Wonderful Free Outfit Coupon
GREAT CENTRAL TAILORING CO.,
Dept. 57 Chicago, Ill.

Please send me Outfit, Suit Offer and everything as stated in your page announcement, absolutely Free and without any obligation to me.

NAME ....

ADDRESS ....

Cut Out Sign and Mail This Now

The Great Central Tailoring Co., Dept. 57 Chicago